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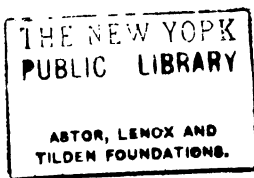
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GEN. E. A. MERRITT

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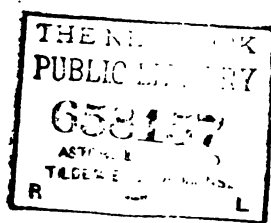
EDWIN A. MERRITT

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## INTRODUCTION

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The career of General E. A. Merritt is a signal illustration of the best features of American social and political life.

Descended from old New England stock, his immediate ancestors were soldiers in the Revolutionary struggle and eminent in laying the foundations of civil polity and of social frame work in Vermont, that sturdy and vigorous first representative of the great commonwealths that have clustered about the original thirteen colonies. Largely self-educated and earning as a teacher the means to obtain his own further academic culture, General Merritt began practical life as a surveyor in the fertile region between the St. Lawrence river and the Adirondack wilderness, and like the great Washington found in that occupation an expansion of sentiment and sympathy often lost in those who pursue their tasks within narrow walls. He took an interest in all public matters and was of those who aided in the organization of the Republican party in 1854 and was one of the most earnest workers in that cause of free soil and free speech that finally triumphed in the election of President Lincoln.

Having become a resident of St. Lawrence county in this State in 1841, it was as a member of the Board of Supervisors of that county and as clerk of the same body, that he first rendered public service from 1854 to 1859. In the latter year he was elected a member of the Legislature and was re-elected to that notable body which, convening on January 1, 1861, by its patriotic endeavor and wise legislation placed New York foremost of the loyal states in the tribute of men and money to save the Union.

Disregarding the favorable political prospects opened to him by his good services in the Assembly, General Merritt determined to go into the field and render there such aid as he was qualified to give.

As Regimental Quartermaster and Commissary of Subsistence, he served over three years in the armies of the Potomac, the Cumberland and the Tennessee, resigning in December, 1864, to accept the position of Quartermaster-General on the staff of Governor Fenton and remaining in that place to the end of the Governor's second term on December 31, 1868.

His vigorous and economical business principles were conspicuously displayed in the important affairs connected with the closing months of the war, the final return of our war-worn veterans and the reorganization of the National Guard of the State. In the conduct of the soldier's homes at New York and Albany and in providing gratuitous means for the collection of back pay and other dues for needy soldiers and their dependent families, his philanthropic sentiments found the means of earnest and practical exercise.

During this period he served as a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1867 to which he had been elected from his senatorial district. In this body of conspicuously able and representative men, General Merritt took an active part and was Chairman of the Committee on the Organization of the Legislature.

President Grant appointed General Merritt Naval Officer of the port of New York on March 29, 1869, where he rendered excellent service in the economical administration of the custom laws until displaced in July, 1870, by one of those factional contests that have too often weakened the Republican party in this State. Many of his admirable official suggestions were, however, subsequently carried into effect by the Secretaries of the Treasury.

For several succeeding years General Merritt devoted himself to private concerns, while retaining a strong interest in political matters. In 1875 he was unanimously nominated by the Republican State Convention for State Treasurer on a ticket that also comprised the names of Frederick W. Seward, Francis L. Spinner and George E. Danforth and which received the enthusiastic support of the party. This ticket was defeated by the extraordinary efforts of the Democrats in preparing for the presidential candidacy of Governor Tilden in the next year.

In December, 1877, General Merritt was nominated by President Hayes to be Surveyor of the Port of New York, his name was favorably reported by Senator Conkling, Chairman of the Committee on Commerce and his confirmation was without opposition. His previous experience in the Naval office enabled him to promptly put in force the reforms recommended in the recent reports of the Jay Commission and to further extend them by reorganization of the force at his disposal and by a rigid system of official responsibility.

The marked success of his efforts in these directions induced President Hayes to promote him, in July, 1878, to the office of Collector of the Port. In this prominent place his trained ability found a large and favorable field and his administration received the cordial support and applause not only of the Treasury Department, the importers and others directly interested, but of the general public who recognized the first successful attempt to rescue this great business office from the domination of partisan influences. Certain political considerations led President Garfield in the early days of his term to appoint General Merritt to the position of Consul-General at London.

This action aroused a general expression of regret that an



officer so efficient in customs administration should be displaced from the principal position where such qualifications were of value. The business men of New York united in a petition to the President praying for his retention as collector, while the press, secular and religious, without regard to party affiliations spoke in the highest terms of Collector Merritt's administration and regretted the imminence of his transfer to another field of duty.

General Merritt was Consul-General from August, 1881, to May, 1885. For the first time the Consulate-General at London was thoroughly and efficiently organized and all branches of its business supervised by citizens of the United States.

During this period General Merritt's reports to the State Department were marked by his characteristic breadth of observation and accuracy of treatment. He investigated the industrial, social and commercial conditions of the British Empire and commented upon them in a clear and unambitious style. It had been his unique opportunity to have occupied those custom places at the great port of New York that best fitted him to appreciate and administer the significant consular work connected with the proper valuation of imported goods. In this field of official duty he rendered great and constant service to our government.

SILAS W. BURT

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**MRS. ELIZA R. MERRITT**

1

# **CHAPTER I**

## **EARLY LIFE**





## CHAPTER I

### Early Life

I have been privileged to be a participant in many events of a great period of our national life, and while I have not thought that my association with them was of importance enough to be made a matter of public record, I have been persuaded by over partial friends to write them out. I consented to do this in the form of an autobiography for my family, and this book is compiled mainly from that record.

Nearly all the persons of public note with whom I have been associated have passed away and it may be of interest to the generation which is succeeding the one in which I was an active worker to learn something of the stirring times which were so fateful to the State and Nation, and of the men who were then influential, but whose names are now only memories.

The conditions of life eighty years ago were hard. Our modern comforts and opportunities of knowledge were then unknown. It was a pioneer age. Labor was hard and poorly paid, and I was not exempt from the hardship which was the common lot. I was born in Sudbury, Vt., February 26, 1828. My father, Noadiah, was the son of Noah Merritt, a revolutionary soldier who served six years in the Continental Army. My great-grandfather of Templeton, Mass., was one of the Minute Men at Lexington. My maternal grandfather, Jeremiah Parker, while working in the field at Leicester, Vt., was captured by the Indians and taken across Lake Champlain to Essex. He was deaf and to this infirmity he owed his release, for the Indians thought

that his deafness was the sign that he was under the guardianship of the Great Spirit.

It was an age of large families, and to my father, by his first and second wives, sixteen children were born. The family was reared in humble circumstances and though the opportunities of education were few, they were carefully used, even at much sacrifice. There were no schools but the common ones and they were of the crudest sort. But the family was a school of itself, in which the older children taught the younger ones, all stimulated and encouraged by my father who was a man of wide reading, exemplary habits, a good neighbor and citizen. He had a fine tenor voice and in his early life taught a singing school. He died in 1854 at 71 years of age. My mother lived until 1867, dying at 76. She was a woman of great kindness, a good wife and mother. She had wide knowledge of the simple botanical remedies and was a helpful friend to the sick and needy. Despite the lack of educational advantages, twelve of the children of the family became school teachers, some of them obtaining distinction as such. Two of the boys became ministers, one in the Methodist, the other in the Universalist denominations. In 1841, my father moved his family to St. Lawrence County, New York, crossing the ice of Lake Champlain on the day that General Harrison was inaugurated President.

Returning to Sudbury at 17 years of age, I worked for my brother who lived upon grandfather's farm, in the winter teaching my first school at Hubbardstown. My health had been impaired by overwork in the field and a sun-stroke so that I was unable to endure hard labor, and I engaged to go out as one of the salesmen or peddlers for my brother who, with a partner, conducted a patent medicine and novelty business. With other agents we accompanied Rockwell &

Stone's circus, joining it at Ticonderoga and remaining with it until we reached Chippewa, Canada. We visited Montreal and the principal Canadian towns, selling our goods, and though the life was one of hardship it was full of interest.

One of the peddlers being taken sick at St. Catherine's, I was sent for to care for him until his recovery. This exhausted all our resources, and retaining only enough to pay my steamer fare to Toronto, I arrived there with fifty cents. Unable from lack of funds to return home I engaged with a man I met at the hotel to get out barrel hoops for flour mills. I was in no condition to set my own terms and greedily accepted what he offered. He paid my hotel bill and I went seventeen miles to my work. Having left my clothes at the circus when I was hastily summoned away, I was very destitute, nor was I much better off when I ended my service of six weeks as I only received enough to pay my board and buy a shirt and a pair of boots.

Boarding at the same place with me were some American contractors for whom I worked until winter in bridge building, and then in their employ in the making of a macadamized road near Lake Simcoe. Our construction camp was primitive. Built of logs, it was kitchen, sitting room and bed-chamber. We slept in bunks and the cooking was done in the same room. It was a hard life and my health failed, and engaging board with a prosperous farmer who had come from the United States, I opened a writing school which attracted many pupils.

In the spring I engaged myself to a mill owner to tend his saw-mill. The hours were long, from midnight to noon, and the pay was not large. Two men had the other part of the day but my work equalled theirs, and it was so appreciated by my employer that I was asked to take charge of his lum-

ber yard and saw mills and sell his lumber. Taken with fever and ague I returned home after my long absence, enriched in experience but not in money. Attending school at the old St. Lawrence Academy for two or three fall terms I taught winter schools at Hannawa Falls, Morley and Potsdam, doing my last teaching in 1852. Our life in the Academy was marked by hard work and hard living. In company with two comrades we roomed in the Academy building, messing together and sharing expenses. Butter was from ten to twelve cents a pound and eggs ten cents a dozen, and though food was cheap, money was dear. We cooked our potatoes on the top of a box stove under a basin. Aside from our room rent our living cost us per capita fifty cents per week. We were an uncouth lot for we had come fresh from the woods, but we studied industriously and kept well up in our classes. We had as fellow students some who afterwards attained distinction, among them being Hon. A. X. Parker, Gilbert B. Manley and Hon. John A. Vance.

In 1850 I worked as a carpenter on the depot in Madrid and saw the first engine go over the road to Ogdensburg. While in the Academy I had learned surveying and was familiar with the use of instruments, and Hon. Benjamin Smith of Russell being engaged to make the survey of a highway from South Colton to Long Lake, I became a member of the surveying force, and when Mr. Smith was taken sick I used the compass and laid out forty miles of road. This opened to me a new occupation which I followed until more important work brought me to another chapter in my life. To those days of out door life I look back with pleasure. I was employed to subdivide the northern half of the township of Hollywood, an intricate work which gave me standing as a surveyor, and I aided in the preliminary survey of the Rome and Watertown railroad, making a topographi-

cal map of the route. This insured me employment as an engineer when the road was to be located. I did the compass and transit work from Norwood to De Kalb and a portion of the work of excavating, superintended the laying of the rails from Norwood to Canton, the building of the railway bridge at Canton and the abutments and piers at Potsdam. Until the breaking out of the war of 1861 I followed the business of surveying, making maps of many of the towns. In this pleasant occupation I was engaged until the war called me from home to other work.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **POLITICAL ACTIVITY**





## CHAPTER II

### Political Activity

My first entrance into public life was my election as Supervisor of Pierpont in 1854. My re-election followed in the two succeeding years, following which, in 1857, I was made Clerk of the Board, holding the position for four years or until the breaking out of the Civil War.

During my absence from home in 1856 I was nominated for the Assembly on the American or "Know Nothing" ticket, being defeated, however, by the Republican candidate. It was a triangular contest, a Democrat being in the field.

The Republican party under the leadership of Hon. Preston King, was organized in 1856, the Democratic county convention, by resolution merging with the Republican party.

I supported John C. Fremont, the first Presidential candidate of the new party and in 1858 I was elected temporary deputy clerk of the State Assembly. The following year I was elected Member of the Assembly and was re-elected in 1860, entering actively into the canvass of the campaign. It was in the legislative session of that year that my acquaintance began with Horace Greeley. This acquaintance soon ripened into a friendship which became intimate and continued through his entire life. The great editor had come to Albany to take part in the organization of the Assembly in opposition to the leadership of Thurlow Weed and William H. Seward. Thurlow Weed was in the height of a power which lasted many years and was too strongly intrenched to be defeated and his candidate, De Witt C. Littlejohn, was chosen Speaker. An early State Convention of the

Republicans was called and a delegation was selected pledged to William H. Seward as a candidate for the Presidency. Mr. Greeley opposed this candidacy and as a substitute for an Oregon delegate voted in the convention for Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Greeley's action was of course bitterly offensive to the Seward-Weed faction. As the days went on the feeling became intense.

Mr. Greeley's position as the editor of the leading Republican paper in the country gave him great influence and power, and the factional lines became strictly drawn. The radical and aggressive forces of the party followed Mr. Greeley, the conservatives being arrayed with Mr. Seward. Thurlow Weed, as editor of the Albany Journal, together with his prestige as the ablest and most adroit leader of his time, made him a formidable antagonist.

The election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency was a severe disappointment to Mr. Seward and his followers and did not allay the factional strife. The Legislature of 1860 was absolutely under the control of Weed, and the following year a United States Senator was to be chosen.

The radicals favored Mr. Greeley, the Weed party, William M. Evarts, and a small number desired the Hon. Ira Harris. I was one of the five to conduct Mr. Greeley's campaign. The Harris contingent, numbering twenty, preferred Greeley to Evarts.

In the earlier ballots Mr. Greeley led, the Harris leaders assuring us that failing to elect their candidate they would throw enough votes to Greeley to elect him. The Evarts men to prevent this decided to secure an adjournment of the caucus from Saturday to Monday. Governor Morgan's room was the headquarters of the Evarts party. I was outside the executive chamber, when I saw a Mr. Schull, a member from Herkimer county, come out with a resolution

for adjournment in his hand. I had time to reach the caucus and inform the Harris leaders and they united with us against adjournment. The voting continued without change. On the next ballot the expected break was to be made. As the ballot was being called, Mr. Pierce came to me and said, "We can't carry out the understanding as the old man (Thurlow Weed), has sent word that if they will hold on, the Evarts men would come to Harris." This was done and Harris was elected.

It was reported to me by one who was in the executive chamber that when there was a failure to adjourn, Weed said to Evarts, "You cannot be nominated. The best thing to do is to withdraw." Mr. Evarts declined to do this, and without his consent, Weed gave orders to his followers to go for Harris. It was a surprise to Harris who had given up the contest and was in conference with Lieut. Governor Campbell of the Greeley party for the transfer of his followers to Greeley. The final ballot was Greeley, 49, Evarts, 2, and Harris, 60.

Commenting on the result in a letter to Hon. Beman Brockway, Mr. Greeley said: "I thank you for your account of doings at Albany. I ought not to have allowed my name to go before the caucus seeing that success was hopeless from the start; and I cannot avoid the imputation of having sought the office and of quarreling with Weed and Seward because I did not get it, when, in fact, they have not done anything for a year that I so thoroughly justify and approve as I do this opposition to me. I like Seward far better than I could have done had he supported me and wish he had always shown a corresponding spirit. My vote was so large that I do not feel at all mortified by the result; I only regret the obligation it has imposed upon me of coming here (Washington), to engage in a hopeless struggle to repay some friends for the efforts they have made for me."

When Mr. Greeley was being considered as a candidate for United States Senator, John Morrissey, formerly a noted prize fighter, but then a member of Congress, sought my acquaintance and suggested that if Mr. Greeley were really a candidate he would gladly aid him and as he assumed money would be required to conduct the canvass he would be glad to contribute \$10,000, and he authorized me to draw upon him for this amount. When Morrissey was first a candidate for Congress, his district was strongly Democratic and there was no hope of electing a Republican. Mr. Greeley, comparing him with some others, spoke well of him as a suitable representative of his district. He said he had a reputation for being an honest man and that he believed he would not sell his vote, as some representatives had been charged with doing. Mr. Morrissey stated that he considered Mr. Greeley a good friend to the poor and popular in his district and he considered that what Mr. Greeley said about him was of valuable service to him in his canvass. Mr. Morrissey, after entering Congress, was anxious to leave behind him a good record for his son — and his record was a good one.

Soon after the election of Lincoln to the Presidency he invited Mr. Weed to come to Springfield and through him he tendered the position of Secretary of State to Seward, and the fact was given to the press. This was the only public announcement of a cabinet position until the appointment of all the other members.

On his way to Washington, President Lincoln stopped at Albany and was received by the Legislature in joint session. He was introduced by Senator Andrew J. Colvin, a Democrat, who had been made President, pro tem., of the Republican Senate for the day and for the purpose of presiding. Mr. Lincoln responded, and knowing of the intense feeling that prevailed, tactfully declined to be entertained by

either faction, even declining to accept Governor Morgan's invitation.

The fact of the conspiracy to assassinate Mr. Lincoln on his way to Washington is familiar. The advertised route was changed, the Capitol was safely reached and the great President entered upon his great career.

Mr. Greeley decided to go to Washington to confer with the President in regard to the organization of the Cabinet, with special reference to the appointment of Salmon P. Chase as Secretary of the Treasury. I was in New York and in a conference of Mr. Greeley's friends, it was decided that Col. Mix and myself should accompany Mr. Greeley as a bodyguard. The reports in regard to the peril of Mr. Lincoln had created anxiety for Mr. Greeley's safety. No man among the secessionists was more intensely hated. Mr. Greeley objected to these precautions but was overruled, and we arrived in Washington a week before the inauguration and remained until after the selection of the cabinet.

The headquarters of the radicals with whom Greeley was associated was at Willard's in the room of Hon. James S. Wadsworth, father of the former member of Congress and grandfather of James W. Wadsworth, Jr., former Speaker of the Assembly. In the coterie were Gov. Denison of Ohio, Senator Fogg of New Hampshire, Frank P. Blair of Missouri, Henry B. Stanton, David Dudley Field, Reuben E. Fenton, of New York, and other men of like celebrity. The sharpest contest was between the advocates of Chase and Simeon Cameron for the Treasuryship. Thurlow Weed's rooms were the headquarters of the Camerons. Greeley's zeal for Chase was equalled by his hostility to Cameron. The opponents of Chase sought to prejudice Lincoln against him by citing his supposed abolition sentiments and the opposition that his appointment would be offensive to the border

slave states. Delegations from Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia made urgent protest under the skilful manipulation of Weed and Seward. This was offset by the opposition claiming that Cameron was the unscrupulous controller of the Legislature of Pennsylvania, and was corrupt in his political methods. The fight was intense and inclined to bitterness. It was important that Senator Benjamin Wade of Ohio should be enlisted on the side of Chase. Although both were from Ohio, they had belonged to opposing factions. His acquiescence in the appointment of Chase was essential and the President had given a hint to that effect.

Preston King, Wade's friend, was selected for the work. He was not active in the canvass but he was friendly to Chase. He had retired for the night but he was awakened and taken to Wade's apartments. He also was in bed, but his consent to withdraw his opposition was secured. When this was reported to Lincoln he sent for Greeley and informed him that he had decided to appoint Mr. Chase. An anxious company waited in Wadsworth's room for the return of Greeley from his conference with the President. When he arrived he swung the door wide open and with boyish glee danced about the room. Being asked "What is it, Mr. Greeley?" he replied, "I can't tell you, but you can bet your bottom dollar on Uncle Abe." It was the only time during my long acquaintance with Mr. Greeley that I ever saw him unduly excited, but he repeated many times, "You can bet your money on Abe. Bet your bottom dollar."

Mr. Greeley's candidate for Secretary of the Navy was Gideon Wells and Mr. Bates, as Attorney General. Montgomery Blair was a candidate for Secretary of the Navy. The day the nominations were sent to the Senate for confirmation, I was walking down Pennsylvania Avenue with Mr. Greeley when we met Mr. Blair, who had just learned that he had been nominated for Postmaster-General. He

expressed surprise and disappointment and asserted that the announcement of his candidacy was the first intimation he had of his selection for that office. He assumed that he was to be Secretary of the Navy. Cameron was a candidate for the Treasury but was nominated Secretary of War. Neither was satisfied and both ultimately retired. Cameron was subsequently appointed Minister to Russia. Chase also retired and was made Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

The great political shrewdness of Lincoln was seen in his not consulting these gentlemen as to the positions they were to occupy, as they would doubtless have objected, but being appointed they could not well decline to serve, and no serious complaint could be made by their friends that their claims for recognition had been ignored.

I was privileged to hear President Lincoln's inaugural address. The New York delegation was near the platform. The venerable Chief Justice Taney administered the oath, Lincoln's old antagonist, Stephen A. Douglas, holding Lincoln's hat while he spoke. Fearing trouble, U. S. Troops with a battery were located on Capitol Hill, Gen. Winfield Scott being in command. The Republicans in Washington were very apprehensive.

During our stay in Washington Col. Mix and myself were constantly at Mr. Greeley's side, and when he was at the National Hotel we occupied an adjoining room. Only on one occasion did we apprehend danger to him and that was at Willard's Hotel. While passing through the office he was assailed by a Mr. Wallack, Editor of the Washington Star, who was under the influence of liquor. He charged Mr. Greeley and the Tribune with contributing to the sectional feeling. Mr. Greeley in a quiet way endeavored to explain his position. The crowd gathered quickly and threats were made, but Col. Mix and myself pushed through the crowd and brought him safely to his room.





## **CHAPTER III**

### **THURLOW WEED, THE WARWICK OF NEW YORK**



## CHAPTER III

### Thurlow Weed, the Warwick of New York

My first personal acquaintance with Thurlow Weed was in the winter of 1860 when I was Member of Assembly. The bills authorizing the construction of street railroads in the City of New York had passed the Legislature and were vetoed by Governor Morgan. I voted against them because no provision was made to compensate the city for the franchise and use of the streets. The incorporators, who were distributed through the State, were understood to represent the members of the Legislature, of which Mr. Weed was the leader. He desired to pass the bills notwithstanding the veto, which would take a two-thirds vote. Mr. Weed sent for me as he did for others and urged me to vote to override the veto. After complimenting me as a "rising young man" he gave me, as a special reason, that the Presidential campaign would require a large amount of money and assured me that there was very little doubt that Mr. Seward would be the Republican candidate and that a large sum could be procured from the incorporators. I asked him how much and he responded, \$300,000. He justified the measure as being in the interest of the city. He did not convince me that I ought to vote for the bills and, of course, I did not get further recognition from him. He was the leader of the Republican party in the Legislature and Governor Morgan and he were political as well as personal friends. Geo. Bliss, Jr., was Governor Morgan's private secretary, and I found him working for the bills and I went to the Governor on the assumption that he wanted his veto sustained and told him what I had heard of Bliss's work. He said he left the

responsibility with the Legislature. I left him with the impression that, while he was to get credit for the veto, they would pass it over his head, which proved to be the case. My next meeting with Mr. Weed was soon after I was appointed Quartermaster-General on Governor Fenton's staff. At the Astor House, General Harvey, Judge-Advocate on the Governor's staff, wished to introduce me to Mr. Weed, to which I consented. Mr. Weed expressed some surprise at my changed appearance and was quite cordial and invited us to dinner and ordered champagne. After the break in the party and his opposition to Governor Fenton and his administration he was very distant and cool. He and Mr. Seward supported Andrew Johnson and the State ticket headed by John T. Hoffman for Governor and V. L. Pruyn for Lieutenant-Governor, against Fenton and General Woodford. While I was Naval Officer of the Port of New York, I found it necessary to make some changes in the subordinates. The chief deputy, a friend of Thurlow Weed, whose name was Franklin, and who had been practically the chief after the retirement of General Dix, desired to remain, and Mr. Weed, who had considerable influence at Washington, endeavored to prevent his removal. I nominated Judge Kingsley to succeed him. Considerable delay occurred until the Judge got a letter from Senator Conkling, not addressed to me but to the Collector. When that was shown by Secretary Boutwell to General Grant he consented to the change. It was generally understood that Mr. Weed practically controlled the patronage of the naval office. My reason for the change had no relation to Mr. Weed. When I became Collector of the Port, Mr. Weed called upon me with his daughter, Harriet, to inquire about some friends in the office. I informed him of President Hayes' policy and that changes should not be made for personal or political reasons and that

if he had friends in positions in whom he had especial interest, I should make it a point to look up their records and if found satisfactory they would not be disturbed. I could not promise to retain unworthy or inefficient men. From that time on our relations were most cordial and I visited him frequently at his home on 12th Street. He had practically retired from political activity. He was in declining health, but in a reminiscent mood and I enjoyed my visits with him very much. He was quite free to comment on the political contests in our State and the active leaders in them. I do not suppose he quite forgave Mr. Greeley and Governor Fenton for their opposition to his plans. He was undoubtedly the ablest political leader of his time in our State. He was a kindly hearted and generous man and socially a popular man. I came to know his daughter, the wife of Mr. William Barnes. She took an active interest in politics and in some respects resembled her distinguished father, which gave her a commanding influence in the circle in which she moved. In 1876 when Governor Morgan was a candidate for nomination for Governor the opposition desired Mr. Evarts and I opened correspondence with him and he consented to the use of his name for that office. The State convention met at Saratoga Springs. A caucus of those in favor of Mr. Evarts, at which Hon. A. X. Parker presided, was held. It was so largely attended that Mr. Weed and his friends were alarmed. Representations had been made to Mr. Evarts that he could not be nominated and he sent a letter to Hon. Geo. W. Curtis, one of his strongest supporters, to have his name withdrawn. When we learned of this fact I had an interview with Hon. Joseph Choate, Mr. Evart's law partner, and urged him to prevent the withdrawal. After the discussion of his candidacy by the newspapers it would be better for him to have his name go into the convention. He wanted

to know how many votes he could get and I assured him he could get 100. He thought this a creditable showing and the letter was suppressed. He received 126 votes. Before the meeting of the convention Mr. Weed sent for me and urged that I would aid them to make Mr. Morgan's nomination unanimous, that he was a friend of Mr. Evarts and it would injure him politically to be beaten in the convention as he surely would be. I conceded that Mr. Morgan would be nominated but that the opposition had gone so far that we were entitled to be heard in convention, and that the motion to make the nomination unanimous would come from the minority; that George Wm. Curtis was asked to be spokesman and that quite a large number had indicated a purpose to bolt the nomination of Morgan, and that the action I suggested would make Mr. Curtis the leader of the minority. The result justified my prediction. After the adjournment Mr. Weed met me and extended both hands and thanked me for declining his advice. In occupying the position I represented the opposition and not on personal account. The result gained for Mr. Evarts a political status which he had not heretofore occupied, and made him an available candidate for Secretary of State and justified President Hayes in selecting him for the position. He was also one of the attorneys before the Electoral Commission that determined the election of President Hayes over Samuel J. Tilden.



**GOVERNOR FENTON**



1

**CHAPTER IV**  
**THE CIVIL WAR AND MY RELATIONS WITH**  
**FENTON**



## CHAPTER IV

### The Civil War and My Relations with Fenton

On November 1, 1861, I was appointed Quartermaster of the 60th New York Volunteers, which was organized at Ogdensburg, and on the day on which I accepted the position I took charge of the office and we started for the seat of war.

I served in that capacity until 1864, having participated in the campaigns of the army of the Potomac, in Virginia and Maryland, and went with the regiment to Tennessee under General Hooker and participated in the campaign from Murfreesboro to the Tennessee river and in the campaign which culminated in the battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge in October, 1863.

The regiment re-enlisted as a veteran regiment and returned home on leave of absence until the spring of 1864 and returned to Stevenson, Alabama. On the campaign toward Atlanta I accompanied the regiment as far as Kenesaw Mountain. I was then promoted to the position of Captain and Commissary of Subsistence, and was assigned to a post at Great Falls on the Potomac above Washington to supply the reinforcements for Sheridan's army.

At the close of that campaign I was ordered to Annapolis, Md., with four officers of the same department to assist me, to pay the returning soldiers from rebel prisons commutation of rations under a law which provided for the compensation of prisoners who had been held in rebel prisons. While there I received notice of my appointment as Quartermaster-General of the State of New York. Reuben E. Fenton was

elected Governor in 1864, defeating Governor Seymour, who was a candidate for re-election.

The notice of my appointment as Quartermaster-General was conveyed to me by Hon. C. T. Hulburt, member of Congress from my home district. The following was Governor Fenton's note to Mr. Hulburt:

Albany, N. Y., December 16, 1864.

My Dear Sir.—I enclose note to Capt. Merritt, requesting him to accept the position of Quartermaster-General on my Staff. You will have the kindness to see him and advise him to resign his A. Q. M., U. S. A., in order to reach here by the 30th or 31st inst.

Very truly yours,

R. A. FENTON.

Hon. C. T. HULBURD,  
Washington, D. C.

I replied to Governor Fenton's request with the following letter:

OFFICE, DEPOT COMMISSARY OF SUBSISTENCE.

Washington, D. C., December 22, 1864.

Hon. R. E. Fenton, Governor Elect of New York, Albany, N. Y.

Sir.—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt this day of your communication dated Albany, Dec. 16, 1864, tendering me the position of Quartermaster-General on your Staff.

I take great pleasure in accepting the position and have as a preliminary step forwarded to the Hon. Secretary of War my resignation as Capt. Com'g Sub. of Vols., which will no doubt be accepted.

I hope by faithful performance of duty in the position assigned me to justify the confidence which you have thus reposed in me.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your obdt. svt.,

E. A. MERRITT.

My resignation as Captain was accepted and I entered upon my duties as Quartermaster-General on Governor Fenton's staff, January 1, 1865.

My associates on the staff of Governor Fenton in his first term were Gen. Wm. Irvine, Geo. S. Batcheller, James B. Swain, Alex. W. Harvey, Frank Chamberlain, Dr. Jas. L. Pomfret, S. D. Marvin, Michael J. Farrell, Delavan D. Morgan and John Manley. The Chief of the Bureau of the Military Record was Lockwood L. Doty.

The war still being in progress, they were still raising troops in New York to fill vacancies in the regiments in the field, and also an additional regiment or two. The demand upon the staff was a heavy one. Included in my ordinary duties was the care of the sick and disabled soldiers who had not only returned from the seat of war, but were located in the different hospitals most convenient to the field of operations, and special appropriations were made for their nursing and care and for such supplies as were not ordinarily furnished by the Government under what was called "special agencies." There had also been established a large depot in the city of New York to care for and look after troops passing from the seat of war and returning through New York. This depot was subsequently discontinued and the duties were transferred to Albany. The State was most liberal in making appropriations for the care of the sick and disabled.

A Bureau of Military Statistics and Museum was established and assistance in the collection of bounties freely given.

Under a joint resolution of the Senate and Assembly it was arranged that all the flags of the different regiments should be returned to the custody of the State and that the celebration of the Fourth of July at Albany in 1865 should be a military demonstration under the general direction of the Governor.

It was found to be very difficult to secure an orator for the occasion and it was desired that Rev. Edwin H. Chapin, the noted pulpit orator of New York City should be had if possible. He had been invited by the Young Men's Association, but had declined, as he had several other invitations. Having had acquaintance with the trustees of his church in New York I suggested to Governor Fenton that if he would commission me to go to New York that possibly we might secure his acceptance of the invitation. He said, "You take the next train for New York if you think you can do that." This was on Saturday evening. Sunday morning I attended his church and saw his trustees, and when the service was over we surrounded him and finally succeeded in getting his acceptance, with the promise that certain statistics should be forwarded to him. I procured what he requested.

The celebration was to take place a week from the next Monday. At that time I took considerable pride in being able to get his acceptance after he had declined so many calls.

The plans for the outside celebration included the building of a temporary structure, and a very large gathering of soldiers and citizens, ten thousand or more, were present. It was my duty as Quartermaster-General to present the flags that day. General Grant, of course, was the chief guest of the occasion and it took a long time to present these flags separately, there being over two hundred of them. I proposed that this part of the program be omitted, but General Grant said, "No, I think they had better be presented, there may be some soldiers representing all of these regiments who will be glad to see their old flag."

Addresses were made by Governor Fenton and General Sickles, and an oration delivered by Dr. Chapin, which was a great effort. General Grant afterwards said to me that it was the finest oration he ever heard.

The most active politicians about Albany were Hamilton Harris, Ira Harris, Hugh J. Hastings, editor of the Knickerbocker, Dr. Jno. Swinburne, Wm. Weed, Abram Van Vechten, Dr. Vanderpool, John Barclay and Geo. Dawson, editor of the Journal. Among the prominent younger men was Chas. Emory Smith, editor of the Express, who was afterward private secretary to Governor Fenton. His first secretary was Beman Brockway, editor and proprietor of the Watertown Times. He did not remain long as private secretary, but was made a canal appraiser. My acquaintance with him from that time on during his life was very intimate and I regarded him as one of my warmest personal friends.

Those whom I have named were of the Republican party. Among the Democrats were Wm. Cassidy, editor of the Albany Argus, Daniel Manning, of the Argus, Judge A. J. Parker, Erastus Corning, and Judge Peckham.

A bill to increase the fare on the New York Central railroad was passed by the Legislature and vetoed by Governor Fenton. There was much controversy over the passage of this bill and various charges of corruption were made in connection with it. While the bill was in the Governor's hands he asked my opinion as to what I thought should be done with the bill and inquired as to the sentiment of the people in Northern New York concerning it. I gave him my views very freely, saying that if I had the power I should certainly veto it, notwithstanding the great influence in favor of increasing the fare.

"Well," he said, "come into my library," and he then showed me the draft of his veto message.

My relations with the Governor were such at that time that I was pursued by reporters and others to see if they could get some inkling of what was to be done. My answer to them was, "If you are in the Senate chamber at the proper time



you will get the earliest information that the public can have whether he signs or vetoes the bill, for I am sure that he will give his reasons."

Soon after the veto was sent in a modified bill was introduced and it was claimed that the objection to the bill by the Governor had been practically overcome and that there was a possibility that another bill might be passed. This statement was entirely untrue and the Governor desired that his unalterable position should be known to the representatives of the New York Central railroad, of which Mr. Erastus Corning was the principal representative in Albany. He asked me to see Mr. Corning privately and convey a message to him which he outlined, and in order to be sure that there would be no mistake about it I put that in writing and called upon Mr. Corning and explained the situation to him and the hopeless prospect of their getting the legislation that they wanted, and I left my memorandum with him without signature. He said that he appreciated the position in which the Governor was placed and that he had every confidence in Mr. Fenton's belief in the soundness of his position with regard to it and that he should inform the railroad people and advise them not to proceed further in the matter at that session. It was one of the most important acts of Governor Fenton in its effect upon the interests of State. He had been able to learn the details of the railroad business in a confidential way and was satisfied that they ought not to have an increase of rate.

It was not long after that that a dividend of eighty per cent of stock was declared to the stockholders.

Mr. Corning had been in Congress with Governor Fenton and, although differing in politics, they were good personal friends. At the inauguration of Governor Fenton on the first of January, it was customary for the incoming mem-

bers of the staff to pay their respects to the outgoing Governor, and we called upon Governor Seymour at his residence and had a most genial and pleasant interview. This was my first acquaintance with Governor Seymour. I afterward met him frequently, and was always very much pleased with him. I recall that he was very liberal in his hospitality that day.

As soon as the war ended the policy of Governor Fenton's administration was to get back to a peace standard as soon as possible and reduce expenses.

The most difficult thing for Governor Fenton to do was to so distribute the patronage to satisfy all factions of the party. There were factions at that time and it was impossible to satisfy everybody.

It will be recalled that the Republican party as organized was made up of Free Soil Democrats and Whigs. Governor Fenton and his immediate friends were of the old Democratic party, while Thurlow Weed and Horace Greeley, George Dawson and William A. Wheeler were of the Whig party.

It soon became apparent that there were to be factional divisions mainly upon those lines. Mr. Greeley, however, was a warm supporter of Governor Fenton.

President Lincoln, who had just entered upon his second term, was assassinated on the 14th of April of that year, and it was determined to take the remains by the way of New York, Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland and Chicago to Springfield, Ill. Upon arrival of the remains in New York city they were taken to the City Hall and lay in state from ten o'clock until about the same hour next day. The people who desired to see the remains came not only from the city but from the adjoining country. A continuous procession was admitted all night long until the time of removal of the remains. At midnight a requiem anthem was sung by

1,200 members of the choral societies of New York and vicinity. This was one of the most impressive features of the ceremony.

The procession to leave New York consisted of the U. S. troops who were located in the vicinity of New York, the National Guard, the Congressional committee from Washington to accompany the remains to Springfield, and representatives of all the civic bodies of the city. Governor Fenton and his staff, the Congressional committee and the Mayor were the only parties who were permitted in carriages. The procession went up Broadway to 34th Street, down 34th Street to 11th Avenue and to the railroad depot at 30th Street and 11th Avenue. The whole city seemed to have turned out to view the procession and all of the cross streets were blocked. It was said that more people saw the procession than any gathering that had been held in the city of New York.

We proceeded to Albany where the dead President received a like tribute. The remains lay in state at the Capitol during the night and the people of Albany, Troy and vicinity gathered to view the remains. The next day the procession was formed and the remains taken through to Buffalo. General Geo. S. Batcheller and myself were designated as the officers to represent the Governor and accompany the remains through the State. Only those who were alive at that time can appreciate the profound feeling of sorrow and devotion which was experienced by those who witnessed this spectacle. It was in fact a funeral procession from Washington to Springfield.

The last time I saw President Lincoln alive was during a visit to the War Department at Washington, where I went to procure arms for the National Guard of the State of New York. This visit was a very short time before President

Lincoln was assassinated. As I was passing by the White House Mr. Lincoln came out on the steps to bid farewell to a gentleman, who was dressed in the height of fashion. Mr. Lincoln was bare headed and wore a black alpaca sack coat and a pair of carpet slippers. A number of disabled soldiers who were in sight, seeing me talking with the President, came forward to shake hands with him and he greeted them all cordially.

Andrew Johnson, Vice-President, a war Democrat, by the death of Mr. Lincoln became President, and at first seemed disposed to follow Mr. Lincoln's policy and satisfy the Republican party who had elected him. He soon changed his course and the result was that a very serious division occurred in the ranks of the party, and especially in New York.

Thurlow Weed and W. H. Seward supported Mr. Johnson, Mr. Seward being Secretary of State. In 1866 an attempt at what was called "Johnsonizing" the party became a very serious problem and strong opposition to Mr. Fenton's re-election as Governor resulted.

The campaign was a very animated one, but he was elected over John T. Hoffman, who was the Democratic candidate. Mr. Pruyn, a Johnsonized Republican, candidate for Lieutenant-Governor, was defeated and General Stewart L. Woodford was elected. Both Woodford and Fenton received 7,502 majority in St. Lawrence county.

After four years of Governor Fenton's administration John T. Hoffman was elected Governor and after the ceremonies the Governor and his staff formally called upon Mrs. Hoffman at Congress Hall, where they had rooms, escorted by the Jackson Guards, who had been especially detailed as escort to Governor Hoffman during his inauguration. We were presented to Mrs. Hoffman by a member of the new

staff and invited into the dining room, where one of the most elegant collations that could be served had been brought from New York by a caterer. Of course we did not accept refreshments at all, as we had no desire to mar the beauty of the table. The aide-de-camp unwittingly invited the Jackson Guards in to partake. The result was that Mrs. Hoffman had to close her refreshment room and they could not offer refreshments to the citizens of Albany.

I was detailed afterward to attend Mrs. Fenton at the Governor's mansion and in the evening Governor Hoffman returned the call. He was an elegant gentleman and very choice in his language. I cannot exactly recall what he said, but if it had been put into the usual vulgar phrasing it would have been pretty vigorous on account of the incident referred to above.

The factional division of the Republican party in this State after Johnson became President continued and was increased by those who were dissatisfied with Mr. Fenton's disposition of the patronage, but, notwithstanding the opposition, a solid delegation from New York to the National Convention of 1868 was for Governor Fenton's nomination as Vice-President with General Grant.

The first great meeting held in New York to bring General Grant before the country for President was originated and organized by Governor Fenton and his friends. The Honorable Lyman Tremain made the leading speech at a meeting in New York City.

General Grant had always been recognized as a Democrat but had taken no part in political contests at that time. The great hold which he had upon the country as Commander-in-chief of the army at the close of the war made him available as a presidential candidate and he was unanimously nominated.

The opposition to Mr. Fenton in New York insisted upon going to the Convention at Chicago and doing whatever it could to defeat him. Such a division of sentiment was created that he was defeated for the nomination. This intensified the feeling on the part of his friends, which at the time constituted the majority of the party, and he was urged to be a candidate for the United States Senate in opposition to Governor Morgan, who was then in the Senate and desired re-election.

Mr. Fenton was not inclined to be a candidate, hoping that he might enter General Grant's Cabinet, and he favored the nomination of Noah Davis of Albion, at that time a Justice of the Supreme Court.

In making a pretty careful canvass of the Legislature of 1869 it was believed that a majority could not be concentrated upon Judge Davis. The question was submitted to his immediate friends to determine whether he should take the responsibility of the canvass or should retire and leave the field open for Governor Fenton. This decision was not reached until about a week or ten days before the holding of the caucus and his name was then eliminated.

The contest for the U. S. Senate followed, and although Mr. Hoffman had been elected Governor by the Democrats, the Legislature was Republican and the sympathies of the Democrats about Albany were on Mr. Fenton's side and especially those of Governor Hoffman, who one evening gave a dinner to a large number of gentlemen, among whom was Governor Fenton. I desired to see Mr. Fenton on some business and so called at Governor Hoffman's room and was asked to go right into the dining room, where I had a whispered conversation with Governor Fenton while he was sitting at the table. Governor Hoffman whispered to me and wanted to know what was to be the outcome, and I told him

we were greatly encouraged, and he expressed great hope that we would succeed.

Mr. Greeley and some Republicans of New York and vicinity thought it was advisable that Marshall O. Roberts should be a compromise candidate and he was urged to accept it. I was delegated to see him and induce him to come to Albany for a short period. He was deemed a formidable candidate. He was reputed to be a very rich man and the cry was raised at once that there was money to be used to influence the result. This report came to Mr. Roberts' ears and he said that he would not pay money for an election, although he should be very glad to have the position. He said that Mrs. Roberts would be very glad to go to Washington, but that he could not afford to be charged with purchasing any office. So he retired and left the field open for Governor Fenton. There was also another candidate, Mr. John A. Griswold, of Troy, N. Y., whom his friends hoped might be nominated. His leading representative was Hon. John M. Francis, editor and proprietor of the Troy Times.

When the friends of Governor Morgan became somewhat apprehensive of results unless Mr. Griswold could be got out of the way and induced to support Governor Morgan, it was time something should be done to secure his favor.

Hon. Calvin T. Hulburt, of the St. Lawrence Congressional district, favored the re-election of Governor Morgan and he was induced to go to Washington to see Mr. Griswold, who was then in Congress. I was privately apprised by a friend at Mr. Morgan's headquarters of this program. Our friends recognized the importance of having the Griswold men if possible favor Governor Fenton for second choice and at once secured their favor.

The effort was successfully made to secure that result on the contingency that Mr. Griswold should be out of the field.

I saw Mr. Hulburd take the train and we anticipated that he would arrive in Washington at a certain hour, and about two hours after it had passed a telegram was received from Mr. Griswold by Mr. Francis stating that he could not consent that his name should be used against Governor Morgan. The friends of Mr. Griswold were disappointed at this action of his and in a public way they declared for Governor Fenton.

The Morgan side captured all the vacant rooms in the Delavan House and the Fenton men had only one or two rooms that they could use, the principal one of which I had charge. A very strong lobby was brought to Albany in the interests of Mr. Morgan. The men who had received federal appointment under his favor as Senator, and the most active opponents of Governor Fenton were in charge of the canvass, and at the outset were very confident of Morgan's success, and it was only late in the canvass that Mr. Morgan deemed it necessary to go to Albany himself.

A most careful canvass was made on the Fenton side and the sentiment of the country from which the members came was favorable to Mr. Fenton.

Near the close of the canvas Mr. Charles A. Dana, editor of the New York Sun, came to Albany at the instance of Governor Morgan and friends, while at heart he was friendly to Mr. Fenton and his friends.

I received an intimation from a gentleman who was a personal friend and who through circumstances was compelled to be with the Morgan interests, who was at their headquarters, but who was anxious for our success at heart, and he kept me pretty well advised. He said that if they began to use money he would let me know. I got a signal from him and we met and he informed me that while they had canvassed and felt sure of success, still, they deemed it neces-



sary to secure some additional votes and that they had made arrangements. He made it plain that he was quite sure that such an arrangement had been made, and gave me the names of six persons counted for Fenton who would, for a consideration, vote for Mr. Morgan.

I reported this to our headquarters and to Mr. Fenton, who was somewhat disturbed, but he said, "You see Mr. ——— and tell him what you have heard and if he holds up his hand and says you may not trouble yourself about it, you may know that they are mistaken about it and you may rest easy."

When the caucus was about to be held it was suggested that there should be something done to prevent a lobby influencing the result. Hon. Henry C. Lake of Chautauqua county, and myself suggested that if some police protection could be secured, the Assembly Chamber could be kept closed until wanted for the caucus. The Sergeant-at-Arms of the Assembly, Colonel Pierce of Rochester, thought that if he could have police support he could keep the Assembly Chamber clear for the caucus of everybody except those who were to participate in it. An application was made to the police department for a sergeant and a sufficient number of policemen, to be under the direction of the Sergeant-at-Arms. Mr. Fenton's friends were advised that they could not get into that caucus unless they occupied the gallery, which they naturally did and filled it.

The result of the first ballot was ten majority in favor of Mr. Fenton and there were two blank ballots. On the second ballot Mr. Fenton was nominated, receiving twelve majority.

Subsequently, I learned through the gentleman who was the manipulator or representative of the six votes that were supposed to have been purchased from the Fenton side for

Mr. Morgan, that he had been approached by a man who claimed to represent Mr. Morgan's interests. The party approached was supposed to be able to influence these men, saying that they very much desired their votes and that they were willing to pay liberally. He listened to their proposition and consulted the men, and they agreed to accept \$2,000 each. The representative of Mr. Morgan wanted them to come to his room and arrange with them as individuals, but these gentlemen said, "no, they can't afford to come to your rooms, we will arrange it in this way, you are to be in a certain room and these men will pass through your room and you hand them the money in an envelope." These men passed through the room and each of them took an envelope containing \$2,000 and passed from that through one of the Fenton headquarters. They claimed they had a right to forage on the enemy, and that if money was afloat they might as well have a portion of it and that they voted for Mr. Fenton just the same. I am confident the facts are as stated above. The Assembly Chamber was kept clear for those entitled to participate in the caucus. Of course there was complaint on the part of lobbyists and newspaper men. The caucus did not see fit to open the doors until it adjourned.



**CHAPTER V**  
**GOVERNOR FENTON**



## CHAPTER V

### Governor Fenton

In speaking of these incidents connected with my official life I cannot claim to have had very great influence on important events, but was so situated as to be identified with them, and can fairly claim to have had the confidence of the leading members of the Republican party, especially of the faction with which I was identified. I have no cause of complaint against the Democratic press nor the prominent members of that party.

Governor Tilden, Daniel Manning, Judge Amasa J. Parker, Judge Peckham, father of the late judge of the United States Supreme Court, Andrew J. Colvin, James Brooks, Fernando Wood, Senator James Pierce, Judge Charles Andrews and many others were especially friendly.

Delos DeWolf, William Rice and William Kingsley, with whom I was associated on the Capitol Commission, were also my good friends. The Republican members of that Commission besides myself were Hamilton Harris and Chauncey M. Depew.

I came to know Governor Fenton more intimately than I did any other public man with whom I was associated. His aim was to render the best possible service to the State. In doubtful matters he endeavored to get all the facts relating to the subject and was governed by them. He was always willing to give the public his reasons for any action. He was very careful not to commit himself in official or political matters until fully convinced of the proper course to pursue. He believed in personal interviews with politicians rather than written correspondence.

In 1866, when he was candidate for re-election, he received a letter from New York making certain suggestions and desiring a response to be sent to a certain address. It was also stated that a gentleman at that address would be glad to meet a personal friend of the Governor. At his request I proceeded to New York and the address, and there for the first time I met Gen. Benjamin F. Tracy, who afterward became Secretary of the Navy, and who was Attorney for the New York Times newspaper. The Times, edited by Henry J. Raymond, was supporting the policy of Andrew Johnson and opposing the candidacy of Governor Fenton. Mr. Raymond had participated in the Philadelphia convention, composed of Democrats and dissatisfied Republicans, and it was said that he wrote the platform. He was a friend of Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State, and of Thurlow Weed. The latter had free access to the columns of the Times. General Tracy informed me that the proprietors of the Times were dissatisfied with the course of the paper and wished to support the Republican ticket, but before doing so desired an understanding with Governor Fenton and his friends before they made a public announcement of their change of position, or at least we should be advised of the situation and that they desired to be friendly.

The interview was very satisfactory to the General and the desired change was made. Mr. Raymond had occasion to go up to New Hampshire for his health and Mr. Weed's communications did not thereafter appear.

When General Tracy was Secretary of the Navy in President Harrison's administration, he recalled our first interview and said that the most important interview in that campaign was the one we had at that time.

Governor Fenon was elected, but his majority was so small that the Times had good reason to claim credit for his election.

Gen. James B. Swayne, an Engineer on the Governor's Staff, was an intimate friend of Mr. Raymond. The Governor endeavored to be as impartial as possible in the distribution of patronage, but he would not knowingly appoint any person to a position of trust whom he did not think to be honest and capable. It was not his way to denounce his enemies. He spoke of those whom he thought wrong with regret and would in a mild way endeavor to disabuse their minds. Gen. George W. Palmer and Gen. Selden E. Marvin of his staff were a little nearer to him than others.

Dr. John Swinburne and Leman Thompson of Albany, Frank Hiscock of Syracuse, D. D. S. Brown and Colonel Pierce of Rochester, John M. Francis of Troy, Editor of the Troy Times, Capt. Charles Godard of Brooklyn, Waldo Hutchins and Benjamin Manniere of New York, were also active and warm friends of the Governor. Charles Emory Smith succeeded Hon. Beman Brockway as private secretary and trusted friend of the Governor. Mr. Smith afterward edited the Albany Express, the Evening Journal and subsequently became editor of the Philadelphia Press, Minister to Russia and Postmaster-General.

Hon. Thomas G. Alvord was Lieutenant-Governor during the first term and Gen. Stewart L. Woodford during the second term. The latter was subsequently nominated for Governor but was defeated by John T. Hoffman, the Democratic candidate. During President McKinley's administration he was appointed Minister to Spain. General Woodford came to Potsdam when he was a candidate for Governor to deliver an address at the fair and was my guest upon that occasion. During his visit he, with Hon. A. X. Parker, prepared a challenge to Governor Hoffman for a joint debate during the campaign. Mr. Parker later presented this challenge, but Governor Hoffman declined to accept.





**CHAPTER VI**  
**THE GODARD CONTROVERSY**



## CHAPTER VI

### The Godard Controversy

Col. Abel Godard, of St. Lawrence county, was a candidate for re-election as State Senator in 1867. His first nomination was due to the fact that he had been Colonel of the 60th Regiment of New York Volunteers, which was raised mainly in St. Lawrence and Franklin counties. The soldiers warmly supported him. He accepted, giving assurances that he would be honest and maintain the credit of St. Lawrence, which stood high. Before the close of his term, however, very disquieting rumors were about Albany affecting his character as Senator and I deemed it necessary to investigate them, so far as to determine whether I could support him for second term.

I was a member of the Governor's Staff and it was known that we were friends and that I had been one of his supporters. I became satisfied that Godard ought not to be retained, and so informed his nearest friends that unless he could explain some very serious charges I could not support him longer. He, with two friends, sought an interview, at which he declined to make any explanation. I then frankly told them that I could not support him and should feel at liberty to support any good man who might be a candidate. He then opened a newspaper controversy charging me with circulating unfounded stories against him, to which I responded in an article giving his record in the Senate and called upon him to explain to his constituency rather than to seek a controversy with me.

In the article referred to I stated his action on measures of the Committee of Claims. One certain bill related to

damages on the canal. One was the Jarvis Lord claim bill which had been charged in the debate in the Legislature as fraudulent. I used his name and quoted what had been said. The press of the State noticed this controversy and Jarvis Lord sued me for malicious slander by innuendo and had me arrested. I employed Hon. Lyman Tremain and Rufus Peckham (late Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States) as my attorneys, and they retained Judge Danforth of Rochester. I spent considerable time and money in preparation for trial.

Mr. Tremain said: "Rufus, you know the canal fellows better than I do and you must draw the answer to the complaint." It was a very strong statement and added several charges of corruption which were discovered in our investigation. The result was that Lord finally withdrew the suit. I have all the papers in the case together with copies of the evidence which we intended to use in the suit.

After Governor Tilden had entered upon his duties, the New York Tribune sent a young man of the name of D. D. Loyd as its representative to spend the winter at Albany to report the proceedings of the Legislature. He brought a letter to me recommending him. I told him that if he would undertake an investigation of the canal frauds he could do a good thing for the Tribune and an important public service. He was anxious to undertake it and I put into his hands the pleadings and the evidence.

He wrote two strong articles based upon it. Immediately after the appearance of the second article, Governor Tilden sent in a message to the Legislature asking authority to appoint a commission to investigate the subject. Daniel Magone of St. Lawrence, was made the attorney for the commission. This was some satisfaction for time and money spent and I think a real public service was rendered.

I had no personal acquaintance with Mr. Lord at the time I wrote the article and only used his name to designate the claim, which was for \$30,000. The claim was to be considered by the Canal Board and to be paid, on condition that proper vouchers should be rendered for labor, materials, etc. The attorney informed me that there was no doubt that all of these vouchers were manufactured and that nearly all the papers were in one handwriting and that he believed most of them were forgeries.

Colonel Godard was defeated by an overwhelming majority and Hon. A. X. Parker was nominated in his stead.



**CHAPTER VII**  
**STATE NORMAL SCHOOL AT POTSDAM**

**5**





## CHAPTER VII

### State Normal School at Potsdam

A law was passed in 1867 authorizing the establishment of four normal schools. I took an active part with Superintendent of Public Instruction, Victor M. Rice, in securing the passage of the bill. Previously the schools at Albany and Oswego had been established. The bill authorized the board of supervisors, village authorities and trustees of academies to compete for the location, on the basis of providing grounds, buildings and equipment, etc. The Commissioners of the Land Office with the Superintendent of Public Instruction constituted a board to receive applications and determine the location. There were a large number of applications and among them, one from the Board of Trustees of the old St. Lawrence Academy in Potsdam. The board tendered the academy property, including lands and buildings. I was a member of the board and presented the application. I was, at the time, on Governor Fenton's staff. Anticipating that an additional amount of money would be required, I thought that we should require outside assistance.

Learning that there was to be a special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the county to partition the county into assembly districts, I took the train from Albany and arrived home in the evening and took the early train the next morning for Canton. Edward W. Foster was Supervisor of Potsdam, and I proposed that he offer a resolution for aid, to the extent of \$10,000 to which he demurred, thinking it was useless. I then canvassed the board as hastily as I could before the meeting in the afternoon and arranged to have the resolution introduced by another supervisor, of which I

informed Mr. Foster. He then consented to introduce the resolution as mine, but for which he would assume no responsibility. I consented to its introduction in that way if he would ask permission for me to be heard.

Hon. Charles C. Montgomery was Chairman of the Board. Permission was given and I addressed the Board and they voted unanimously to aid to the extent of \$10,000 in case the school should be located in Potsdam. A petition was then prepared and circulated about the county, especially in Canton, Ogdensburg, Gouverneur and Malone. Hon. Noble S. Elderkin was active in circulating this petition and it was generally signed by prominent men in the localities mentioned.

I presented this to the Board of Location with the resolutions of the Board of Supervisors. A time was fixed for a hearing and it became evident that there would have to be a much larger sum raised to meet the requirements. At the annual meeting of the Board of Supervisors I appeared before them with Hon. A. X. Parker and the Rev. Dr. Fisher, of the St. Lawrence University, and asked assistance to the extent of \$40,000. A resolution to aid to the extent of \$25,000, if a school should be located in St. Lawrence county, was passed. Some assurances were also given that the village of Potsdam would also aid. It began to look promising. At the next hearing all the locations which had filed applications were represented. Some large offers were made by cities. After the action of the Board of Supervisors, Ogdensburg proposed to apply, but did not present it in time for the public hearing. At the time of the hearing no plans for a building had been submitted and I was permitted to address the Board, giving my reasons why the matter of location should be considered as the determining factor instead of the amount of money offered. I insisted that the pur-

pose of the law was to accommodate all parts of the State so far as practicable, and in case a location was considered desirable and the sum offered by such locality was not sufficient they should have the opportunity to supplement the same and a reasonable time be given to respond.

This proposition was received with favor by the larger number of applicants. The Board took the matter under consideration in executive session. Governor Fenton, as Chairman of the Board, announced that the proposition of General Merritt was a reasonable one and that the Board would hear representatives of the various localities on that basis.

I endeavored to present two points, first, that the rural communities would necessarily furnish the larger number of students and therefore should be accommodated near their homes. I gave the school statistics of St. Lawrence, Jefferson and Franklin counties and contended this territory had a just claim for one of the schools. Plattsburg was also an applicant. They proposed to turn over their academy and furnish the amount necessary, and a large sum of money in addition.

My second point was that suitable buildings could be more cheaply built there than any other place in the vicinity on account of cheapness of material and labor. The stone quarry was then open and Potsdam was a lumber market.

After the final adjournment of the Board Dr. Socrates N. Sherman of Ogdensburg, appeared with an application for that locality. On my personal solicitation and the Governor's they received the application and it was considered with the others before a decision was made. Preliminary plans for buildings were made. The Board decided to locate in Potsdam in case assurances were given that the locality should provide \$72,000 in addition to the offer of the academy

building, etc., and that should be determined by a given date. In case we failed it was to go to Plattsburg. The Board was divided and Potsdam had one majority, Plattsburg as second choice and unanimous. It was deemed best to have a special meeting of the Board of Supervisors, a town meeting and a village meeting. A call for a special meeting of the Board of Supervisors was signed by a majority. An active canvass was made by our business and professional men, Hon. A. X. Parker, Judge Henry L. Knowles, Hon. N. S. Elderkin, Henry Watkins, Hon. C. O. Tappan, Rev. Dr. Plumb, W. H. Wallace, Dr. Jesse Reynolds, A. N. Deming, E. D. Brooks, and others.

After the call for the meeting of the Board of Supervisors, I received private information from John Magone, brother of Daniel Magone, that there was on foot a movement to prevent action by the Board of Supervisors by injunction, to restrain them from confirming the resolution heretofore passed, and that Judge A. B. James would issue such an injunction. Mr. Parker, Mr. Tappan and Judge Knowles had a conference and proposed new resolutions and a large delegation attended the meeting. An injunction order restraining the Board was received, and fixed the hearing for a week after our option would expire. Notice was taken of it, and Mr. Tappan was appointed attorney to represent the Board. The Board then adopted a new resolution to which no legal exception could be taken. The town and village meetings were held and voted the amount necessary to satisfy the Board. The next session of the Legislature passed the law authorizing the erection of the necessary buildings and combined the several propositions and the issuing of bonds to provide the money necessary and naming the commissioners to expend the money. Before the meeting of the Board the town of Oswegatchie held a special meeting to instruct their

Supervisor, Mr. Seth G. Pope, to vote against the furnishing of the aid we desired. He had previously voted for this appropriation. He requested me to attend the meeting. Mr. Elderkin and I went to Ogdensburg and he urged us to accompany him. The meeting was called for 12 o'clock noon. About half past eleven we started for the town hall and were surprised to find that the meeting had been held and a resolution passed in opposition. Some one had, no doubt, turned the clock forward. Mr. Pope disregarded the action of the meeting and felt outraged at the attempt to prevent a hearing. He was a strong and independent man and stood by the position he had taken in the interest of education in Northern New York. The town refused to re-elect him the next year. It was a great surprise that Judge James of the Supreme Court should not only lend himself to such a course but was a leader in opposition.

I have given a pretty full description of the occasion. At the hearing in Albany I first made the acquaintance of Dr. Malcolm MacVicar, who represented Brockport before the Board and one of the schools was located there. While the bill was pending in the Legislature he with others represented Brockport for a normal school and was against the bill to establish four, thinking, no doubt, that the way was to provide one at a time and the first one to be at Brockport. He was loyal to the normal school plan and rendered good service as the first principal of our school.

After the passage of the bill for the construction of the school, the Superintendent of Public Instruction said to me, "You must name the Local Board. I was for Plattsburg, and you have fairly beaten me and I will hold you responsible for the first Board." I objected to assuming the responsibility, but he insisted that it would not be wise to have the matter become a subject of controversy. I accepted the re-

sponsibility and consulted with Mr. Parker only. I named as members of the board, without consulting any one of them, Henry Watkins, C. O. Tappan, Dr. Jesse Reynolds, N. S. Elderkin, Aaron Deming of Potsdam, Rev. Dr. Fisher of St. Lawrence University, Canton, John I. Gilbert, Principal of the Malone Academy, Roswell Pettibone of the Ogdensburg Academy, and Mr. Robert Ormiston of Gouverneur. The latter did not qualify and Mr. Parker was named in his place.

There was some dissatisfaction because of my assuming the responsibility as to the composition of the Board. There was an effort made to induce certain members to decline to act so that the Board could not organize. It was a matter of pure jealousy. The Superintendent notified the appointees and named a day for organization. I appeared before them and stated the reason why I had acted without conferring with members of the proposed Board. "I have no personal ends to serve, I do not ask any personal or political favors of you. I will say, however, that if there is any member who does not wish to act, his place will be promptly filled," and I went on to say that I felt sure the interests of the school would be served by their acceptance and trusted they would promptly organize the Board. The nonresidents consulted me as to the Chairman and Secretary and I recommended Mr. Watkins for President. He had formerly been a teacher. I suggested C. O. Tappan for Secretary. I could not claim either of them specially as personal friends. The different religious denominations, as well as the St. Lawrence University and the Ogdensburg and Malone Academies, were represented on the Board.

I will add that I was the only man who appeared before the State Board in behalf of the location in this village. In Potsdam at the outset our friends had so little faith that no committees were sent to Albany to assist.

After the location was settled conditionally, all worked with zeal and rendered the most favorable service, and the effort could not have been successful without this co-operation. The effort made to satisfy the public of the desirability of the location of such a school in our midst and the claim that the taxation for such purpose could not be very burdensome and would be spread over several years have been fully justified. It has grown steadily from the beginning, until at present the faculty comprises about twenty-eight members and about twenty-five hundred students have been graduated. The State has been liberal in the appropriations and the school promises to be as useful in the future as in the past.

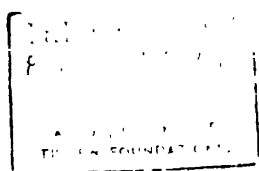
I am pleased to remark here that the reconstruction of the original Normal School building has recently been authorized in a bill introduced in the Legislature by my son and enacted during 1911, appropriating \$225,000 for the work. When this rebuilding has been completed the Normal School will stand as one of the finest and most modern institutions of its kind in the country.







**W. A. WHEELER**



**CHAPTER VIII**  
**THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, NAVAL**  
**OFFICER AND POLITICAL MATTERS**



## CHAPTER VIII

### The Constitutional Convention, Naval Officer and Political Matters

In 1867 provision was made for a Constitutional Convention to revise the Constitution, to which I was chosen as a delegate from this senatorial district. My colleagues in this district were Judge William C. Brown of Ogdensburg, Col. F. J. Seaver of Malone, and Leslie W. Russell of Canton. Hon. William A. Wheeler of Malone was elected as a delegate-at-large. Under the law calling the convention thirty-two delegates were to be chosen at large for the whole State, and at the election the electors could vote for only sixteen, so that those receiving the highest number of votes and those receiving the next highest would be chosen, in this way giving the minority party equal advantage with the majority. Mr. Wheeler was a candidate for President of the Convention, as was also Hon. Charles G. Folger. The contest was quite an animated one, but Mr. Wheeler was successful. It happened to be my good fortune to have charge of his canvass and also to act as his secretary in making up the committees for the convention. I was made Chairman of the Committee on the Organization of the Legislature.

The convention convened on the 4th of June, on which day Mr. L. H. Hiscock, father of Judge Hiscock of Syracuse, was assassinated by General Cole, and the vacancy caused by his death was filled by his brother, Frank Hiscock, of that city. Mr. Greeley was made Chairman of the Committee on Suffrage. He was very attentive to the work until his article was prepared.

There were two propositions which caused a great deal

of discussion, one was doing away with the property qualification for negroes, and the other was the question of female suffrage. The leading Democrats of the convention opposed the change with reference to negro suffrage and finally demanded separate submission of that question. The discussion was largely led by Mr. James Brooks, Editor of the New York Express, in opposition. The leading champion of female suffrage was George William Curtis. As the proceedings became protracted, Mr. Greeley became very impatient with the slow progress of the work and finally took a leave of absence for quite a period, for which period, however, he refused to accept any compensation.

One of the Democratic delegates, Mr. Conger, who occupied a good deal of the time of the convention and made rather long speeches, was on the floor when Mr. Greeley retired, and after an absence of two or three weeks, upon his return he found the same gentleman occupying the floor, and he said when he came in, "My God, hasn't that man got through yet?"

There was an understanding among the Republicans, who were in the majority, that when an article was up for consideration the Chairman of that Committee should govern the time occupied in its consideration, and was to be supported so as to hasten the work of the convention. While his article had been under consideration for some little time, a Mr. DuGanne broke the understanding by moving an adjournment, which was carried by the Democratic side with a few Republicans. After adjournment he was disposed to scold Mr. DuGanne for having interrupted the consideration of the report, to which the latter took offense. Next day, in the absence of Mr. Greeley, he rose to a question of privilege, intending to have a little amusement at the expense of Mr. Greeley, and said that he had been insulted.

But he was induced to drop the subject and the newspaper men got around Mr. Greeley at the Delavan House and wanted to know what this difficulty was between him and Mr. DuGanne, that DuGanne had risen to a question of privilege, and Mr. Greeley said, "What did DuGanne say about it?" Some one replied, "He said you called him a damn fool." Mr. Greeley said, "If I could have put that question to the convention I would have carried it by a two-thirds vote."

It was my good fortune to have a seat by the Hon. Wm. M. Evarts, whom I found to be a most genial gentleman. I came to know him very intimately, which acquaintance continued as long as I was in public office. He was Secretary of State in President Hayes' Cabinet while I was Collector of the Port. I also had a seat beside Mr. Samuel J. Tilden at a hotel where we boarded during most of the period of the convention. This body was composed mostly of the leading lawyers and literary men of the State. Notwithstanding the great amount of talent and the long time taken up with the work of the convention, the people, the next year, rejected all of it except the judiciary article.

In 1869 General Grant was the second time inaugurated as President, and Governor Fenton took his seat in the Senate. The question of New York federal patronage was considered the most important in a factional sense.

Mr. Morgan had very strong friends in Washington, of course, having been Senator for several years. He was prominent in New York also and he had the sympathy and practical support of Senator Roscoe Conkling.

The offices in New York to be filled were Collector, Naval Officer and Surveyor of the Port, at that time most lucrative, and so far as the patronage connected with those offices was concerned, considered most important and influential.



Moses H. Grinnell was selected for Collector. Alonzo B. Cornell and myself were mentioned for Surveyor of the Port. Mr. Fenton had proposed my name, but Mr. Cornell was chosen and under such circumstances that Mr. Fenton was not satisfied because of an unjust assault upon myself, made through the New York Evening Post. Specific charges were made which in no way referred to me, and which the Post finally admitted related to another individual. The result was, however, that Mr. Elihu Washburn, who had been made Secretary of State, proposed to Mr. Fenton that I should be named for Naval Officer. Mr. Fenton said that he didn't know whether Merritt would accept it or not, and that he had nothing to say about it. However, my name was sent to the Senate. Not having been a candidate for the place, and supposing there was some mistake about it, I left Albany in the evening. I arrived in Potsdam that night and the next morning about ten o'clock I received a telegram from George S. Boutwell, Secretary of the Treasury, that I had been appointed Naval Officer of the Port of New York, and asking me to proceed at once to the city, where I would find instructions at the post-office. I took the afternoon train and arrived in New York the next morning and received the papers and found that I had to give \$20,000 bonds. It seemed to me then a very large sum. I went to the Metropolitan Hotel, where I saw the Hon. Lyman Tremain of Albany, who was a guest, and there met also Hon. Waldo Hutchins, and they wanted to know about this appointment. I told them that I was as much surprised as they could be.

I asked Mr. Hutchins about the importance of the position. "Why," he said, "it is a very important position." General Dix had been the last incumbent and had just been made Minister to France. I said, "I do not know as I can

take it, I have got to give large bonds." He asked me how large, and I told him. Mr. Tremaine turned to Mr. Hutchins and said, "Can't you and I fix this up for the General?" He said, "Why yes, we can attend to it, I guess." We went before the United States Commissioner, they qualified as my bondsmen, I took the oath of office, sent it to Washington that afternoon and the next morning got a telegram to take possession of the office.

When I became acquainted with the duties of the office I considered it, and now consider it, the best office for me that the President had in his gift. I held that position for about sixteen months, when Mr. Grinnell who, when appointed Collector, was credited with having raised a large sum of money for the campaign, was found not to be giving general satisfaction. He did not seem well fitted for executive duties, and as the Morgan and Conkling faction was not satisfied either, they induced General Grant to appoint Thomas Murphy in his place, thereby giving Mr. Grinnell the position of Naval Officer. In other words, they shot at him and he dropped down and knocked me off my perch. General Grant, in apologizing to me for my removal, said that in view of the valuable services which Mr. Grinnell had rendered, and as an old merchant of New York, he felt it incumbent upon him to do the best possible for him, and that I was a young man and would get recognition in due time, or words to that effect.

These changes created quite a stir among the politicians of the State and the criticisms were quite strong on the Fenton side, especially concerning my removal.

The following is a copy of a telegram sent by me to Mr. Fenton at this time:

Memoirs of Gen. Merritt  
WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY,

To Hon. R. E. Fenton,

July 1, 1870.

U. S. Senate,

Washington, D. C.

Please do not compromise your position in the slightest degree to keep me in office. Whatever best for the country and Republican party should be done.

E. A. MERRITT.

To soften the feeling of opposition, the President tendered to me through Mr. Wheeler the position of Minister to Brazil, which I was very strongly urged to accept. It was not made with the concurrence of Mr. Greeley and Mr. Fenton, and I did not consider myself fitted for a diplomatic position and so I felt constrained to decline the offer. President Grant nominated Mr. Greeley for Minister to Russia, but he declined it.

Mr. Greeley said to me, "They would be very glad to get us out of the country." These tenders of positions to Mr. Greeley and myself were made in the spring of 1871 and before we made the trip to Texas.

Subsequent to the death of Mr. Greeley, what was called the Liberal Republican Organization was kept alive, and in 1874 Samuel J. Tilden was nominated for Governor by the Democratic party and a place was offered on the ticket to the Liberal Republicans. I was visited by a committee of Mr. Tilden's friends and tendered the position of Lieutenant-Governor on the ticket with him so far as the committee could do it, which I very promptly declined. Mr. Dorsheimer, a Liberal Republican, consented to accept the position and was elected with Governor Tilden.

In 1872, when Mr. Greeley was running for President, Francis Kernan of Utica, was the candidate for Governor and Chauncey M. Depew for Lieutenant-Governor. The

latter stumped the State for the ticket and was my guest when he spoke in Potsdam.

During the Constitutional Convention, as before stated, I became very well acquainted with Mr. Tilden and he begged of me very strongly to stand with them in their canvass and made some very excellent promises. When he was Governor he renewed his appeal and assurances.

I said to him, "I do not like the condition of the Democratic party, and I am not ready to join them, they need reforming."

"Well," said he, "I assure you, General, I'll reform the Democratic party." I replied that he would have a larger job than he appreciated at that time. He had previously made a very strong fight against Tweed's control in New York.

In 1875 I was nominated for State Treasurer on the Republican ticket, practically to represent the Liberal Republican element. I had been previously consulted by the friends of Mr. Conkling, and especially by Charles Emory Smith, who, at that time, was Editor of the Evening Journal at Albany, and who had drafted the Republican platforms. He urged me to accept the position on the ticket and I consented in case the platform was satisfactory. I insisted especially that there should be a resolution against a third term for General Grant for President; that the nomination was to be with unanimity and I should not ask any of my personal friends to advocate my nomination. I understood that this proposed platform was submitted to Senator Conkling, who at first demurred to the third term resolution, but finally consented that it might go in, that if the Liberal Republicans were satisfied at so small a thing as that they might have it. He had not thought at that time that General Grant would be a

candidate for a third term. This resolution, passed by the State Convention, served as an excuse for the anti-Grant Republicans when he was a candidate for the third term. The candidate for Secretary of State on that ticket was Clarence Seward; for Comptroller, Francis E. Spinner, and for State Prison Inspector, Rev. Mr. Ives. The ticket was defeated by an average of about 15,000 majority.

In 1876 Mr. Conkling was candidate for President. James G. Blaine and Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio, were also candidates. When the convention assembled at Cincinnati it was evident that no one of these candidates had the majority of the convention favorable to his nomination. The friends of Mr. Blaine were very confident of success, having New England back of their candidate, and a great many votes in the west also. Soon after the assembling of the convention Mr. Blaine had a sunstroke in Washington and it was thought that he was likely to die. This proved a very great set back to the canvass by his friends. Bulletins were frequently posted at hotels, some favorable and others unfavorable as to his condition, but finally his improvement was such that his friends earnestly pushed his canvass. Mr. Hayes had been a successful Governor of Ohio and was regarded as very sound on financial questions.

When the convention assembled in the afternoon the nomination speeches were made. When Robert G. Ingersoll made that great speech of his nominating Mr. Blaine, it seemed to carry the convention by storm. The opponents, however, combined to adjourn the convention until the next day without balloting. During the night Mr. Conkling's New York friends and Don Cameron of Pennsylvania made a combination in a contingency to support Mr. Hayes in preference to Mr. Blaine. Late

at night I learned of this combination and with Senator Dickinson we went to Blaine's headquarters, saw Mr. Hale and Senator Hamlin (who had been Vice-President with General Grant) hoping that they might in such a contingency use their influence for Hon. William A. Wheeler for President. They did not think we were correctly informed and felt very sure that Pennsylvania would support Mr. Blaine, as he had a great many friends in that State, was a high protective tariff man, and for other reasons.

There had been no general movement to bring Mr. Wheeler forward for President, but he had a good many friends who had hoped he might be the "dark horse" in the canvass. The result was, however, that Mr. Hayes was nominated. I was in the convention as a spectator, but was compelled on account of the extreme heat to leave the convention before the nomination was made. I went to a hotel where I met Governor Fenton, who was confident that Mr. Blaine was to be the nominee. I gave him my opinion that Mr. Hayes would be the nominee and while he was insisting very strongly his views of the case a man went up to the bulletin board right opposite the hotel and wrote the name of Rutherford B. Hayes for President.

"Well, who is to be the candidate for Vice-President" he asked?

"Why," I said, "Mr. Wheeler of New York."

"But," said he, "his name is not mentioned. You seem to be confident all the while that Mr. Wheeler is to receive great honors," or words to that effect.

"Well," I said, "we'll see," and in a very short time his name was written under Mr. Hayes' on the same bulletin board.

I learned afterward that when the nomination of Vice-

President was in order the New York delegation asked leave to retire for consultation and there was an intimation from the representatives of the Ohio delegation that they would nominate whoever New York wanted, and that while the New York delegation was in consultation as to whom they would present, whether L. P. Morton or S. L. Woodford, Mr. Poland of Vermont, nominated William A. Wheeler of New York. George F. Hoar, of Massachusetts, seconded his nomination. It was reported to the New York delegation that Mr. Wheeler's name had already been put in nomination in the convention.

Henry R. James of St. Lawrence, was a delegate in the convention. He left the delegation at once, went into the convention and took the platform, and in behalf of New York seconded the nomination of Mr. Wheeler, and he was practically nominated before the New York delegation returned to the convention. Mr. Wheeler was not a candidate for the place and there was something of a feeling of disappointment on his part when he was informed of the fact. Senator Hoar was a warm friend of Mr. Wheeler and it was largely through his influence that he was nominated. On my return to New York I called upon Mr. Wheeler at Garrisons where he was stopping as visiting inspector at West Point Academy. He was not elated at the distinction he had received. He immediately considered what should be done to fill his place as Member of Congress from the St. Lawrence district. It would naturally come to St. Lawrence county.

I suggested that the place be offered to Judge A. B. James of the Supreme Court, who was near the close of his term, and that Chas. O. Tappan be nominated for the judgeship. To this Mr. Wheeler assented. I went from there to Ballston, where the Judge was holding court, and proposed the matter to him. He was rather reluctant at first as he de-

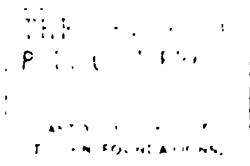
sired a renomination at the close of his term. After consulting with his friends, however, he consented and was elected and subsequently re-elected as a Member of Congress. Charles O. Tappan was elected Judge of the Supreme Court for the Fourth Judicial District to succeed Judge James.







HORACE GREELEY



**CHAPTER IX**  
**HORACE GREELEY**



## CHAPTER IX

### Horace Greeley

In the fall of 1864 the soldiers and officers of the State of New York were permitted to vote in the field or wherever it was convenient. I returned from the field in time to vote at that election and on my way back toward Washington I called upon Horace Greeley, whom I had previously known, and supported for the United States Senate, and explained to him my desire to be identified with the new administration in our State instead of remaining in the army.

At that time the Hon. Calvin T. Hurlburt was the member of Congress from the St. Lawrence district, and, while a friend of mine, he was committed for another candidate for a position.

I explained the matter to Mr. Greeley and I said, "Mr. Hurlburt wants an interview with you in regard to some legislation."

He fixed the time and said, "you come with him."

So when we got through with the business he said to Mr. Hurlburt, "Captain Merritt tells me that he would like to be identified with the new administration, and I think he ought to have a place."

Mr. Hurlburt asked him if he was willing to give him a letter. Mr. Greeley said, "No, I don't give letters to anybody, but you are going back to Washington and you tell Mr. Fenton (who had just been elected Governor) that I wish to have him put Captain Merritt on his staff and if he wants to see me about it I will come over to Washington."

Mr. Hurlburt did so and I consider that my appointment

as Quartermaster-General on Governor Fenton's staff was made in consequence of the request of Mr. Greeley.

My relations with him from that time on became very intimate. I saw him nearly every week when I was in the city and attended the same church and occupied his pew. He was a warm friend of the Rev. E. H. Chapin.

This friendship continued until his death in 1872. In the spring of 1871 Mr. Greeley received an invitation from the Agricultural Society of Texas to give an agricultural address and he accepted the invitation, but his health was not very good and it was deemed desirable by his friends that he should have some friend accompany him on this trip as a traveling companion and to look after him generally. He finally informed them that if I could be induced to go he would be glad to have me and they sent for me. I considered it a great compliment and gladly accepted the invitation.

Mr. Greeley had been considered one of the most offensive men to the south prior to the war and only after he had proclaimed his doctrine of Universal Amnesty and Universal Suffrage did they become interested in him, and of course his trip was advertised in advance and was quite sensational on account of so much anxiety to see and hear him. He refused to use passes on the railroad, which had been sent to him unsolicited.

While passing through the state of Mississippi the levees of the Mississippi broke and flooded the lower portion of the country, so that we could not reach New Orleans by train and we had to take a steamboat at Lake Ponchartrain. While in New Orleans he was given a banquet, at which the prominent citizens of the city, Union soldiers and officers, as well as rebel officers, were present and it was an imposing affair.

Mr. Greeley was anxious to see something of the cultivation

of cane and especially the steam plowing, and so a steamboat was chartered and we went with a large party down the Mississippi river about sixty miles to what is called "Magnolia Plantation" owned by Mr. Effingham Lawrence. Mr. Greeley was very much interested in everything pertaining to agriculture. He had never seen anything of that kind of cultivation.

We arrived in New Orleans late at night and after we had reached the hotel, very much exhausted, Mr. Greeley said, "I have sometimes been called a philosopher. I do not think I am much of one, but if I was ever entitled to the appellation I am to-night."

I said, "How's that, Mr. Greeley?"

"I have been in the presence of a man for twelve hours under circumstances where I could not tell him what a damned scoundrel he was," he said. He told me that this man had recommended his brother to him, who wanted to borrow \$5,000 in New York, saying that he was good for the money and wished that he should introduce him to some bank. Of course that practically meant that Mr. Greeley would indorse his note, and when it matured he had it to pay, and when Mr. Greeley wrote him about it he said he did not owe him anything.

As soon as our visit at New Orleans ended we took the railroad and steamboat to Galveston and there were met by a committee of the State Agricultural Association, and a banquet was also given, at which various speeches were made, all of a friendly character.

The sentiment to which Mr. Greeley was to respond was the Empire State of the North to the Empire State of the South. The introduction was of a character to suggest something of politics and Mr. Greeley was very free in his comments on the cause of the rebellion and finding fault with the



leaders of the Southern people, which caused some offense to his auditors. But it was a vigorous presentation of the northern views.

From there we proceeded to Houston where the State Fair was to be held, and Mr. Greeley delivered his address to a very large gathering. The people came from long distances with their wagons and camped about the grounds. We were most cordially received and entertained while we were in Texas under the charge of the representatives of the Fair. We had an excursion with a large number of the prominent citizens of Houston to the intersection of the railroad with the International R. R. north of Dallas.

The subject of Mr. Greeley's address at Houston was "Suggestions to Farmers." This speech though delivered forty years ago is directly in line with the spirit of the modern thought concerning the subject of agriculture, and the teachings of the address tend to emphasize his thorough knowledge of the fundamentals of that great topic of the present times.

The closing maxims of the address were as follows:

"Let me close with a few maxims, applicable to cultivation in every clime and under all circumstances, whether among populations dense as that of China or sparse as that of British America.

I. Only good Farming pays. He who sows or plants without reasonable assurance of good crops annually, might better earn wages of some capable neighbor than work for so poor a paymaster as he is certain to prove himself.

II. The good farmer is proved such by the steady appreciation of his crops. Any one may reap an ample harvest from a fertile virgin soil; the good farmer alone grows good crops at first, and better and better ever afterward.

III. It is far easier to maintain the productive capacity of a farm than to restore it. To exhaust its fecundity, and then attempt its restoration by buying costly commercial fertilizers, is wasteful and irrational.

IV. The good farmer sells mainly such products as are least ex-

haustive. Necessity may constrain him, for the first year or two, to sell Grain, or even Hay; but he will soon send off his surplus mainly in the form of Cotton, or Wool, or Meat, or Butter and Cheese, or something else, that returns to the soil nearly all that is taken from it. A bank account daily drawn upon, while nothing is deposited to its credit, must soon respond "No funds;" so with a farm similarly treated.

V. Rotation is at least negative Fertilization. It may not positively enrich a farm; it will at least retard and postpone its impoverishment. He who grows Wheat after Wheat, Corn after Corn, for twenty years, will need to emigrate before that term is fulfilled. The same farm cannot support (nor endure) him longer than that.

VI. Wisdom is never dear, provided the article be genuine. I have known farmers who toiled constantly from daybreak to dark, yet died poor, because, through ignorance, they wrought of disadvantage. If every farmer would devote two hours of each day to reading and reflection, there would be fewer failures in farming than there are.

VII. The best investment a farmer can make for his children is that which surrounds their youth with the rational delights of a beautiful, attractive home. The dwelling may be small and rude, yet a few flowers will embellish, as choice fruit-trees will enrich and gladden it; while grass and shade are within the reach of the humblest. Hardly any labor done on a farm is so profitable as that which makes the wife and children fond and proud of their home.

VIII. A good, practical Education, including a good trade, is a better outfit for a youth than a grand estate with the drawback of an empty mind. Many parents have slaved and pinched to leave their children rich, when half the sum thus lavished would have profited them far more had it been devoted to the cultivation of their minds, the enlargement of their capacity to think, observe, and work. The one structure that no neighborhood can afford to do without is the schoolhouse.

IX. A small library of well-selected books in his home has saved many a youth from wandering into the baleful ways of the Prodigal Son. Where paternal strictness and severity would have bred nothing but dislike and a fixed resolve to abscond at the first opportunity, good books and pleasant surroundings have weaned many a youth from his first wild impulse to go to sea or across the continent,

and made him a docile, contented, obedient, happy lingerer by the parental fireside. In a family, however rich or poor, no other good is so cheap or so precious as thoughtful, watchful love.

X. Most men are born poor; but no man, who has average capacities and tolerable luck, need remain so. And the farmer's calling, though proffering no sudden leaps, no ready short-cuts to opulence, is the surest of all ways from poverty and want to comfort and independence. Other men must climb; the temperate, frugal, diligent, provident farmer may grow into competence and every external necessary to happiness. Each year of his devotion to his homestead may find it more valuable, more attractive than the last, and leave it better still.

Farmers of Texas! I bring you mainly old and homely truths. No single suggestion of this Address can be new to all of you; most of them, I presume, will be familiar to the majority. There are discoveries in Natural Science and improvements in Mechanics which conduce to the efficiency of Agriculture; but the principles which underlie this first of arts are old as Agriculture itself. Greek and Roman sages made observations so acute and practical that the farmers of to-day may ponder them with profit, while modern literature is padded with essays on farming not worth the paper they have spoiled. And yet, the generation whereof I am part has witnessed great strides in your vocation, while the generation preparing to take our places will doubtless witness still greater. I bid you hold fast to the good, with minds receptive of and eager for the better, and rejoice in your knowledge that there is no nobler pursuit and no more inviting soil than those which you proudly call your own."

We started for Austin and went as far as Giddings, about one hundred miles west of Houston, which was then the end of the railroad at that time just being constructed. In consequence of a heavy rainstorm which raised the river so that it could not well be forded, we were compelled to retrace our steps and left for Columbus.

This city is located on the west bank of the Columbus river. This trip was a very interesting one. On it I saw one

hundred and ten acres of corn that was tasseled out and which measured on an average eight feet high.

We visited a colored school there and saw the teachers, and were interested in their methods. We returned to Galveston and the colored people in that city gave Mr. Greeley a serenade to which he responded in a political speech, which was listened to with marked attention. He was frequently applauded, especially in his references to the restoration of the Union. This was the principal political speech he made while on his trip.

In the course of his Galveston speech Mr. Greeley made the following explanation of a fact for which he had been criticised:

"When the proclamation was issued by President Johnson charging Jefferson Davis and other Southern leaders with complicity, and that the Southern people had countenanced assassination, I rejoice to know that the call for revenge was over-ruled by the forbearance of the North. Any death caused by legal process for treason after the war would have caused great bitterness. I therefore rejoice that I belong to a people wise enough to recollect this. It was widely circulated that I was condemned by the Union League for becoming security for Jefferson Davis. Those who blamed me for it, though I did not defend myself or go near them, were beaten three to one, while thousands denounced them. The better sense of the mass of the North justified me. I did not do this out of any particular friendship, for we were always opposed to each other. The act was an effort on my part to reach the heart of the Southern people, who felt that their cause was involved with Jeff Davis. I therefore did it for the Southern people and not for Jeff Davis though they were equally guilty with him."

We returned to New Orleans and took passage on the steamboat Robert E. Lee up the Mississippi river to Vicksburg.

In the meantime Mr. Greeley had received an invitation to deliver an address at Memphis, Tenn., which he accepted.

Upon our arrival at Vicksburg, where we met some New York people, a committee had come down from Jackson to urge Mr. Greeley to deliver an address in Jackson, and as the train would arrive there early in the evening, and as he could not leave until late, he consented to do so. He took up the subject of "Education and the Duties of the People with Regard to the Education of the Colored People especially." He warned the people of the danger of permitting the young of their race to grow up in ignorance and vice and urged that the wall of prejudice should be broken down. He went so far as to urge his hearers to commend the nobility shown by those Christian teachers who had left home and friends to help to educate the poor and unfortunate race, and he also warned them not to be influenced by demagogues against the true interests of their country.

We proceeded from Jackson to Memphis and were delayed on the way by a train wreck, so that a special train was sent out to meet us and we, in consequence, arrived pretty late. The audience had already gathered at the opera house, which was full to overflowing. Mr. Greeley delivered one of his characteristic lectures.

The Memphis Advocate thus described Mr. Greeley:

"Mr. Greeley's appearance when met on the train was more that of a plain country farmer than anything else. Instead of the historic white hat and coat which everyone talks of in connection with Mr. Greeley, but which have probably not distinguished him for a quarter of a century, he wore an alpaca coat with light vest and dark trousers, with a straw hat at his side. Except that his clothing fitted him badly — great men must have their eccentricities — there was nothing remarkable about it. His head is massive, face broad, kindly and benevolent, while in manners he is cordial and attractive. These, with a heavy, vigorous frame and an exceedingly awkward gait, rolling like a ship at sea in a storm, were his distinguishing characteristics. On the top, his head is quite bald, but white locks appear bounteously from under the broad sombrero which gives to the philosopher a decidedly venerable appearance."

The subject of his address at Memphis was "Self-Made Men." He referred to Benjamin Franklin, Daniel Boone, Robert Burns and Shakespeare. In beginning his remarks Mr. Greeley said that many years before, he had a conversation with Wm. Henry Hurlbut, an eminent scholar, and had been told by him that there were many young men who came to him annually with parchments on which were inscribed "Master of Arts" and "Bachelor of Arts" from the universities, Yale and Harvard and others, and he found that not one in ten who had received what was called a classical education knew the A B C of the Greek language in a short time, and he would rather that young men should learn to play the fiddle than receive a classical education, for then they would remember it. Mr. Greeley said that he considered that the teaching of algebra was to a certain extent a misappropriation of time; and the drift of his argument upon this subject was that the young should be taught those branches of education which would fit them for the responsibilities of life. Speaking of Shakespeare he referred to him as "the worldly-minded, shrewd Shakespeare, the greatest if not the best of British poets — this pale fellow of nobles and players, who brought forth prose and poetry, wit and pathos, almost in the same breath." In closing his address Mr. Greeley said: "I would have the physical element primarily regarded because I would have every child to earn his living with his hands. Had not Franklin been an early and eminent printer, or some other good workman, he would not have been the great philosopher which he was. He comprehended what I would have everyone learn — to use his hands effectively." Mr. Greeley closed by saying that there should be a time for play and a time for work, and that the day would come when there would be a university in every township, and when the

sinews of men would have to give way before the powers of steam and machinery.

After the lecture quite a number of the prominent citizens called upon him at the hotel and were presented. They were principally secessionists, and at that time were greatly disturbed because of the legislation to suppress what was called the "ku klux." They thought that the legislation was not justified by the facts and were anxious to give Mr. Greeley information on the subject, claiming that the charges made against the South in that way were unwarranted and that they were being belied, so to speak. Mr. Greeley said that the Tribune had sent a couple of very reliable men down to investigate and that the facts gathered in Northern Georgia and Tennessee established beyond a doubt that the colored people had been oppressed.

One of the men said, "What do you think of the legislation?" and Mr. Greeley replied, "I am not much of a lawyer, but I think there are over one hundred negroes living to-day who wouldn't be except for that law."

The next day we took a drive about the city and called at the hotel to which we had directed our correspondence to be sent and at which Jefferson Davis was a guest. The gentleman keeping the hotel was anxious Mr. Greeley should come into the house and asked him if he didn't care to meet Mr. Davis, and Mr. Greeley said that he did not know Mr. Davis. If Mrs. Davis was there he would call upon her. He had previously met her in New York.

When we got back to the Overton hotel Mr. Davis came and called on him and I was present at the interview. It was all very commonplace. Mr. Greeley inquired after some men he had known in Congress and asked after Mrs. Davis, etc. We were nearly ready to take the train at this time.

I refer to this little episode more particularly because after-

ward a good deal was made of the occasion when Mr. Greeley was running for the Presidency, his opponents claiming that he had been hobnobbing with Mr. Davis.

On the way up from Memphis to Louisville we occupied a special car and had not proceeded very far before a gentleman came in and walked up and down the aisle. The conductor whispered to me and said, "That is Isham G. Harris, formerly Governor of Tennessee." He did not ask to be introduced to Mr. Greeley, but soon commenced conversation and they sat down together and I got near enough to hear the conversation. Mr. Harris referred to the condition of the country and hoped Mr. Greeley had had a pleasant trip, etc., etc., and finally the subject of politics was referred to. Mr. Greeley frankly said that he thought the war was brought on by the leading politicians, that the people did not want to secede and that they were practically surprised into war. Mr. Harris took exception to this and Mr. Greeley went on and quoted statements made by Senators and Representatives at different times and places throughout the South, quoting their language, until Mr. Harris had to say that he lived there and knew what the sentiment was.

Mr. Greeley said, "You may sir, but you do not understand the situation," or words to that effect.

Pretty soon Mr. Harris left the train and when I informed him that I had expected him to quote I. G. Harris, he said, "If he had ever said anything worth remembering, I should."

When we arrived at Cincinnati we stayed there over Sunday. In the morning Mr. Greeley said, "Well, we must go to church." I said, "I am tired Mr. Greeley." "Well," he said, "I've broken off a great many good habits, but I haven't broken off the habit of going to church."

"Well," I said, "there are no churches of your denomination here."



He said, "There's always a Methodist church. My mother was a Methodist and I like to hear the psalm singing," so he went to church, and they found he was there and induced him to deliver an address to the Sunday school. We then returned to New York.

I was astonished at the retentive memory and familiarity of Mr. Greeley with all of the past political controversies of this country regarding the South.

In 1872 when the Liberal Republican conference was called to meet at Cincinnati I took Mr. Greeley's draft of resolution which he hoped that the conference might adopt. He did not at that time expect to be a candidate for President. His name, however, had been mentioned in the newspapers. He said that he wouldn't go to the conference because it would be charged that he was going there to promote his candidacy. He said that if I would telegraph him to come to Cincinnati he would know that his name would not be mentioned and that he would go. He was, however, nominated.

Mr. Greeley had not been in good health and the campaign was a great strain upon him. He made a most wonderful set of speeches in the campaign. He had been indorsed by the Democratic party also, but the leaders of that party were hostile to him and did not support him cordially.

After the October election in North Carolina and Pennsylvania, which was carried by the Democratic party, Governor Fenton and I had an interview with Mr. Greeley and went over the situation as we saw it then. Mr. Greeley said that if Democrats would not support as good a man as Mr. Buckelaw, who was running for Governor in Pennsylvania, he had no reason to expect them to support him, and that he had given up the contest.

He said, "I have done all I can, I must now go to the bed-

side of my dying wife." She died soon after. I invited him to take a trip to the Adirondacks as soon as the election was over for rest and recuperation, which he so much needed. He could not under the circumstances agree to do so. From that day neither of us were disappointed in the result of the election.

Mr. Greeley was a most kind-hearted gentleman, responding freely and promptly to any call for charity. I called upon him once in the editorial rooms and a poor woman came asking for some pecuniary help. He was too busy to talk with her as to her special needs and he handed her a five dollar bill without seeming to notice the denomination. His dealings with Cornelius Vanderbilt, Junior, show how he could be moved by an appeal. Mrs. Vanderbilt, the mother of Cornelius, Jr., appealed to Mr. Greeley to look after and advise her son. The young man was somewhat wayward. His mother said that Mr. Vanderbilt, Sr., was impatient with his son and was not disposed to aid him in a business way. The result was that Mr. Greeley loaned the young man various amounts and indorsed for him until the amount exceeded \$40,000. The old Commodore warned Mr. Greeley against aiding Cornelius, as he stated that the latter had not a head for business and that he would not be responsible for his debts. It did not seem to deter Mr. Greeley from complying with the wishes of the mother. After Mr. Greeley died John F. Cleveland, his brother-in-law, was made receiver of his estate. Mr. Cleveland asked me to aid him in the examination of his effects. The question arose as to what should be done with the evidences of Cornelius' debts? They were finally shown to the Commodore, who said that he had warned Mr. Greeley against aiding Cornelius, and he would not promise to pay them, but, as Mr. Greeley was a public man his family ought not to suffer for his financial mistakes, or words to that effect,

and that he would call upon Mr. Greeley's daughters. He did so and gave each of them a \$5,000 bond of the Harlem railroad. After the Commodore's death his will only provided the income on \$500,000, I think, for Cornelius, which amount was not satisfactory and a contest by him with his sister followed which resulted in a compromise which made it possible for Cornelius to pay Mr. Greeley's estate the principal and interest, amounting to over \$60,000. Cornelius stated to me that he should not have contested the will except to procure enough to pay this indebtedness and that Mr. Greeley was the best friend he ever had. Mr. Greeley's interest in young Cornelius was further shown by a request made of me while I was Naval Officer at New York. The following letter from Mr. Greeley explains the circumstance:

NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

New York, April 4, 1869.

Dear Sir.—The bearer is my friend Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr., who has special reasons for seeking an honorable position under the government. He will not hold it long at any rate, and would try to discharge its duties with signal fidelity. If he could prove to his father that he is able and willing to earn an honorable independence he would be able soon to do much better for himself than anyone else can do for him. I beg you to give him an interview and if there shall be anything suitable in your gift, offer him an appointment.

Yours,

HORACE GREELEY.

Hon. E. A. MERRITT,

Naval Officer.

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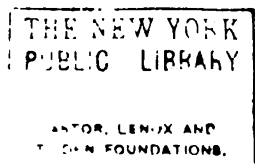
The following are some of the letters received by me from Mr. Greeley:

**New-York Tribune.**

New York, April 4, 1862.

Dear Sir:

The keeper is my friend  
Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr who  
has spent enormous sums  
upon benevolent functions on  
behalf of the Government. He would  
not hold it long at our rate,  
and would try to direct  
its duties with signal  
fidelity. If he were free  
to his father that he is old  
and willing to soon see an honor-  
able independence, he would  
be able soon to do much better  
for himself than any one else  
could do for him. I beg you to give  
him an interview, and if there  
shall be any thing <sup>outlook</sup> in your gift  
offer him an appointment.  
Yours,  
H. A. Mearns, Horace Wells,  
Novel Office.



New-York ~~Times~~ Tribune.

New-York, Nov. 27, 1868.

dear Fred:

I wish you would  
meet at my room here  
at 10 A.M. of Friday  
a few friends whom I  
have asked to collect here  
and consider the feasibility  
of prosecuting  
friends in the Revolu-  
tionary organization of  
our city henceforth

Yours,

Harold Evelyn

Gen. Geo. A. Merritt.

no not office  
instead

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ASTOR LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

New York, November 17, 1869.

Dear Sir.— I wish you would meet at my room here at 10 A. M. Friday a few friends whom I have asked to come here and consider the feasibility of preventing feuds in the Republican organization of our city henceforth.

Yours,

HORACE GREELEY.

General E. A. MERRITT,  
Naval Officer,  
U. S. Custom H.

NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

New York, October 31, 1871.

My dear Sir.— Our city is in doubt but I shall be disappointed if we do not come out with three Assemblymen here and as many in Brooklyn, and 3 Senators this side of Albany, where we now have none.

As to the State ticket, I cannot tell. I think they will have less than 30,000 average in the city, but I may be mistaken. I hope we shall elect Barlow, and perhaps one or two others.

Yours,

HORACE GREELEY.

Gen. E. A. Merritt,  
Potsdam, N. Y.

NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

New York, November 14, 1869.

Dear Sir.— The bearer, Mr. Fursheim, believes he has the clue to detect an extensive smuggling business now in progress.

I commend him to your attention and confidence.

Yours,

HORACE GREELEY.

Gen. E. A. MERRITT,  
Naval Officer,  
Custom House.



## NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

New York, June 20, 1871.

Friend Merritt.—I have yours of 18th at Potsdam. I cannot go to your county next week because I have promised to go to Ohio the week after to speak at the laying the corner stone of Buchtel College. I cannot be absent both next week and the week after.

I expect Gov. Fenton here just before and just after your corner stone laying at Albany. You must be here then.

Yours,

HORACE GREELEY.

Gen. E. A. MERRITT.

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## NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

New York, March 31, 1869.

Dear Sir.—I have just heard by Mr. Cleveland that you would like to have me justify as one of your sureties.

I should like especially to do so. I go out of town in the morning and shall not be back till Saturday evening. If you want me to qualify as one of your sureties, leave word and I will do so next Monday. I can swear to a property of not less than \$50,000.

Yours,

HORACE GREELEY.

Hon. E. A. MERRITT,

Naval Officer,

N. Y.

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## NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

New York, May 17, 1869.

Dear Sir.—I dare not come to the Custom-House lest the office seeking wolves should devour me, so I venture to ask you to ascertain of Mr. Grinnell his decision in the case of Dexter Allen, applicant for a position as entry clerk, in whose behalf I interceded. I do not wish to importune Mr. Grinnell, nor to add anything to

what I have already said in the premises, but simply to ascertain the fate of Mr. Allen's application. Yours,

HORACE GREELEY.

Gen. E. A. MERRITT,  
Naval Officer.

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TELEGRAM.

THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

Dated, New York, May 18, 1868.

Received at Chicago, May 18, 1868, 5:10 P. M.

To Gen. Edwin A. Merritt,  
Tremont House.

You are fully authorized to say that I prefer the nomination as Vice President of Governor Fenton.

HORACE GREELEY.



**CHAPTER X**  
**SURVEYOR AND COLLECTOR OF THE PORT OF**  
**NEW YORK**



## CHAPTER X

### Surveyor and Collector of the Port of New York

Mr. Rutherford B. Hayes and Mr. Wm. A. Wheeler were supposed to be elected President and Vice-President, but the question was not settled until the decision of what was called the electoral commission was created by Congress, consisting of fifteen members, to consider the election of electors in some of the southern states, especially Florida and Louisiana. It was claimed in both instances that the majority of the votes in these states had been given to the Democratic electors, but the charge was made that it had been brought about through fraud and intimidation. Especially was this the case in Louisiana. The final decision of this electoral commission, by eight to seven, declared the Republican electors chosen, which gave them one majority in the electoral college.

Early in the spring of 1877 President Hayes decided to change the customs officials at the port of New York. At that time Chester A. Arthur was Collector, Alonzo B. Cornell was Naval Officer and Gen. Geo. H. Sharpe was Surveyor, but his term had expired. He finally nominated Mr. Roosevelt for Collector, L. Bradford Prince for Naval Officer and myself for Surveyor. The first two were rejected by the Senate and I was confirmed.

After adjournment of Congress the relations between General Arthur and Mr. Cornell with the Treasury Department had become so strained that the President determined then to make the changes which he had attempted to make before adjournment. Popular opinion generally was against any further changes at that time and the Republican newspapers

of New York were quite severe in criticism of Mr. Hayes for the movement. By the time they got ready to act I was not very well and had a short leave of absence and came home to Potsdam. I received a telegram asking me to proceed to New York immediately if possible to meet a gentleman from Washington on a matter of great importance. I went to New York and there met Hon. John D. Defrees, who was the public printer and a great friend of President Hayes. He informed me of the proposed program and tendered me the position of Collector of the Port. I temporarily declined to consider it. I thought the action unwise at that time and thought it was very sure to increase the factional controversy in our party in New York and I had very great distrust of my ability to conduct that office in view of the bitter hostility that would be engendered, inasmuch as General Arthur was Chairman of the State Republican Committee and also of the Republican Committee of the City of New York, and nearly all of the prominent positions in the customs house were filled by his personal friends. Mr. Defrees went back to Washington but asked me to remain until I should hear from them. Next day I received a telegram from John Sherman, Secretary of the Treasury, to meet him at the Fifth Avenue Hotel on the arrival of the Congressional Limited Railway train. At that interview he agreed with me that it was unwise to take this step at that time, but said the President was stronger than the people supposed and he had made up his mind to make the changes and that he personally desired me to accept the position as Collector, and I said that I wanted twenty-four hours to consider it. He also outlined what they proposed to do in case I declined, naming two persons to whom the tender would be made in case the second one refused. Secretary Sherman urged me to accept the Collectorship, but he agreed with me that the proposed action on the part of the President



R. B. HAYES



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ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

would be unwise. He asked me to formulate my reasons. I did so, when he said: "I agree with you, but Mr. Hayes has made up his mind to act and is stronger than the people suppose and in this matter he will not listen to my advice. If this should reach him he might name another gentleman even before my return." So it was not sent. He urged me strongly on his own account and wished a favorable response the next day. The newspapers of the city had condemned the first effort to remove General Arthur and Mr. Cornell. I called upon Mr. Whitelaw Reid, editor of the New York Tribune, late at night at his residence and explained the situation to him. He asked me to call the next morning. He said that while he did not approve of the proposed changes, if I accepted I should be well treated personally. He desired an opportunity to see Mr. Cornell, who was Naval Officer, before any announcement should be made. I, that day, informed Mr. Sherman that I would assent to his wishes. I had, as Naval Officer and Surveyor, learned the importance of prompt action on the part of the Secretary of the Treasury on all matters requiring his action on Custom House matters. To this he assented, and I attribute my success in that office largely to the prompt action of the Treasury Department upon all controverted questions. I immediately called upon General Arthur and explained the situation to him and the reasons why I had assented to the program; that a change had been determined upon and that my policy would be to continue all that part of the Custom House force which were properly performing their duties. Our relations of personal friendship continued, notwithstanding his disappointment. Mr. Sherman, on behalf of the President, tendered him the position of Consul-General at Paris, which he declined.

I finally came to the conclusion that I should be greatly embarrassed as Surveyor by the appointment of either one of

these proposed. As I was the Executive Officer outside of the Customs House, and supposed to be particularly friendly to the administration, I might be held responsible for any political changes, and I finally consented to accept the position.

At that time the law did not permit an absolute removal of an officer confirmed by Senate, but they might be suspended without consent of the Senate, and during the suspension some person might be appointed to discharge the duties. I advised the retention of Mr. Cornell in the Naval Office. I had known him well and regarded him personally as a friend, but they were not willing to consent. Then I advised, if I took the place, that Col. Silas W. Burt, who was Special Deputy in the Naval Office, be named Naval Officer. I had a pleasant and confidential talk with Mr. Arthur and explained the situation to him as well as I was able, that it was not a question whether I should take it or someone else, as they had made up their mind to make the change.

Col. Silas W. Burt and myself were appointed and I recommended the appointment of Gen. Charles K. Graham for Surveyor of the Port, which office would become vacant by my promotion. These appointments would hold until the close of the next session of the Senate only.

Upon the assembling of Congress on the first of December, the nominations were made in the regular way and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Navigation, of which Senator Roscoe Conkling of New York was chairman. Our names remained in the Senate until the third of February and the Committee reported against our confirmation.

Gen. John B. Gordon, of Georgia, a Democrat, and Senator Matthews of Ohio, a Republican, were my principal supporters in the Senate. General Gordon was a member

of the committee which considered the nominations and he afterwards told me that the debate in executive sessions of the Senate upon the subject became very bitter; so bitter, in fact, that at an earlier date it might have led to personal encounters.

This controversy was considered a factional one in our State and finally became of considerable national importance, and as Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Prince had been rejected by the same Senate, Mr. Conkling was very confident of preventing our confirmation. Whatever may have been said with regard to previous administration of the Custom House, we were enabled to so satisfy the business community as to secure their favor and in a certain sense, our confirmation ceased to be a party question. Representations were made pretty strongly that we had improved the Custom service, and whether true or not, it had its effect.

While the nominations were pending the friends of Arthur and Cornell organized a very strong party and had headquarters in Washington, and I had reason to suppose that the confirmation would be very doubtful and I so felt at the time of my appointment, but I felt at that time that if I declined it would practically take away the sympathy of the administration from me and I had better undertake it than be a subordinate of some collector in whom I had not the fullest confidence as to his political and business judgment.

Mr. Conkling was able to secure the support and friendship of most of the Senators in the eastern part of the country, Democratic as well as Republican, Senators McPherson of New Jersey, Eaton of Connecticut and others, and while he and Mr. Blaine were not in accord, they agreed as to the policy of rejecting President Hayes' nominations.

Mr. Hamlin, the late Vice-President, who was then Senator, and who was a personal friend of mine, opposed my confirmation. He apologized to me afterward, and assured me

that it was on account of his opposition to the President's policy.

I made only one visit to Washington with reference to the confirmation and, of course, consulted with President Hayes and Mr. Sherman, but I did not go near the Senate. I had an interview with two or three Senators by accident, one of whom was Senator Voorhees of Indiana, who very strongly favored my appointment, and said that he would support me, but when the time came he did not.

I had an interview with Hon. Francis Kernan, United States Senator from New York, with whom I was well acquainted, having served in the Assembly and also in the Constitutional Convention with him. He explained to me that he was very much embarrassed by the question, that his Democratic friends in New York were divided and that while he was personally friendly to me he thought he could not take any part in it.

I said to him, "I've no claim upon you either politically or personally, but of course I would be glad to be confirmed if I can be."

Upon my return to New York I deemed it necessary to secure Democratic support and I invited my old friend, Hon. James F. Pierce, State Senator, to see whether he could be of some service to me, and he finally drew a petition addressed to the United States Senate, asking for my confirmation. Upon his return to Albany the Democratic Senators, I think, unanimously indorsed it. A separate petition signed by Republican friends in the Legislature was also prepared and forwarded. The Democratic petition was sent to Mr. Kernan by the Hon. Waldo Hutchins, with the request that he should present it to the Senate. He did so, stating that while he did not recognize the right to be dictated to, that these gentlemen were representatives of his party in New

EXECUTIVE MANSION  
WASHINGTON.

4 Feb. 1879

My Dear General:

I congratulate you on your confirmation. It is a great gratification to me, very honorable to you, and will honor, I believe, of signal service to the Country. My desire is that the office be conducted on strictly business principles, and according to the rules for the Civil Service which were recommended by the Civil Service Commission in the Administration of Gen Grant. I want you to be perfectly independent of mere influence from any quarter. Neither my recommendation, nor that of Secretary Sherman or of any Member of Congress, or other influential person must be specially regarded. Let appointments and removals be made on business principles and according to rules. There must

must, I assume be a few confidential  
places filled <sup>by those</sup> who personally  
know ~~the~~ <sup>to be</sup> trustworthy, but restrict  
the area of patronage to the narrow-  
est limits. Let no man be kept  
out merely because he is a friend  
to Mr Arthur, and no man kept in  
merely because he is our friend.

The good of the service should be  
the sole end in view. The best  
means yet presented, <sup>it</sup> seems to me,  
~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> the rules recommended by the  
Civil Service Commission. I

shall issue no new orders on  
the subject at present. I am  
glad you approve of the message,  
and I wish you to see that all  
that is exposed or implied in it  
is faithfully carried out.

Again congratulating you, and assuring  
you of my entire confidence, I remain  
your Ever-Respectful  
Sincerely,  
R. B. Hayes.

York Legislature, etc. The Republican petition was forwarded to Hon. William A. Wheeler, Vice-President, to be used at his discretion. He did not use it.

When the Democratic petition was presented it gave an excuse for Democrats who were not especial followers of the Tilden faction to support my nomination against Mr. Conkling and Mr. Blaine, whom they did not very well like, and possibly regarded President Hayes as the weaker element of the party.

Fernando Wood, a Member of Congress from New York, invited a number of southern Senators to a dinner and they decided to favor my confirmation. John Kelly of New York, who was Mayor of New York, also took some interest in the matter, and a number of Republican Senators who had stood by Senator Conkling in the rejection of Roosevelt and Prince decided also to favor my nomination, notably Senator Morrell of Vermont, Senator Sanders of Nebraska, and some others. I was confirmed by nine majority, receiving twenty Democratic votes and thirteen Republican.

Upon the occasion of the confirmation of my nomination as Collector, I received the following letter from President Hayes:

EXECUTIVE MANSION,

Washington, February 4, 1879.

My dear General.— I congratulate you on your confirmation. It is a great gratification to me, very honorable to you, and will prove, I believe, of signal service to the Country. My desire is that the office be conducted on strictly business principles, and according to the rules for the Civil Service which were recommended by the Civil Service Commission in the Administration of Gen. Grant. I want you to be perfectly independent of mere influence from any quarter. Neither my recommendation, nor that of Secretary Sherman or of any Member of Congress, or other influential person must be specially regarded. Let appointments and removals be made on business



principles and according to rules. There must, I assume, be a few confidential places filled by those you personally know to be trustworthy, but restrict the area of patronage to the narrowest limits. Let no man be put out merely because he is a friend to Mr. Arthur, and no man put in merely because he is our friend. The good of the service should be the sole end in view. The best means yet presented, it seems to me, are the rules recommended by the Civil Service Commission. I shall issue no new orders on the subject at present. I am glad you approve of the message and I wish you to see that all that is expressed or implied in it is truthfully carried out.

Again congratulating you, and assuring you of my entire confidence, I remain,

Sincerely,

R. B. HAYES.

Gen. E. A. Merritt.

Governor Fenton, who was in Rome at the time of my confirmation, wrote me as follows:

HOTEL BRISTOL,

Rome, February 7, '79.

My dear General.—A cable despatch in the London Times of the 4th says "The Custom Officers, N. Y., were confirmed by the Senate, 3rd. inst., notwithstanding the opposition of Senator Conkling." I do not lose a moment from my pen in congratulating you upon this conspicuous indorsement. Indeed, the posts are so important and the opposition so marked and bitter, it was hardly less than a peril to the administration to be defeated and hardly less than a triumph to you to be sustained. I can well say this, as I feel, in view of the merits of individuals, but even more hearty, if possible, are my rejoicings on behalf of the public interests. Please make known to Gen'l Graham and Col. Burt my personal good feeling over this result and my confidence that it will have the general approval which invariably follows an intelligent discharge of duty.

And now, my dear Gen'l, allow me to add this word. You know in feeling I am not proscriptive. I have not been in practice, nevertheless I have always held that the personnel of the public service

Gov. R. E. Fenton

Hotel Bristol

Rome Feb 7. 79

My Dear Genl

A cable despatch  
in the London Times  
of the 4<sup>th</sup> Sep, "Three  
Custom House Officers  
H. G. & were confirmed  
by the Senate, 3<sup>rd</sup> inst.,  
notwithstanding the  
opposition of Hunter  
banking".

I do not lose a  
moment from my  
pen in congratulating  
you upon this  
conspicuous endowment.  
Indeed, the post

~~are~~ so important  
to the opposition so  
worked & bitter, it  
was hardly less than a  
peril to the Adminis-  
tration to be defeated  
& hardly less than a  
triumph to ~~go~~ to  
be sustained. I can  
well say this, <sup>without</sup> in view  
of the unity of  
individuals, but  
even more so,  
if possible, ~~one~~ <sup>any</sup> sign  
of joining on behalf  
of the public interests.  
Please make known to  
Genl Graham & Col  
Beest my personal

and feeling over this  
result & my confidence  
that it will have the  
general approval which  
invariably follows an  
intelligent & faithful  
discharge of duty.

And <sup>now</sup> my Dear  
Genl, allow me to  
add a few words.

Was <sup>indefinite</sup> ~~number~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~and~~  
not prescriptive, &  
have not been in  
practice, nevertheless  
I always held that the  
personnel of the public  
service should cordially  
accept the spirit &  
purposes of those who

on at the head & who  
are responsible for  
its honor & success.

I have written  
himself for this  
evening's mail - &  
for open eye only.

Very sincerely yours  
R. C. Hoar

P.S. Will be glad to  
hear from you -  
- address -

Care of. General Hager's  
Bankers  
Paris - France

should cordially reflect the spirit and purposes of those who are at the head and who are responsible for its honor and success.

I have written hurriedly for the closing mail and for your eye only.

Very sincerely yours,

R. E. FENTON.

P. S.— Will be glad to hear from you.

Address care of Drexel Harges & Co., Bankers,

Paris, France.

President Hayes was so committed to Civil Service as applicable to the chief departments of the Government that he insisted that we should undertake to formulate rules for the Custom House. We did so and received the approval of the Civil Service Commission, of which George William Curtis was Chairman. Our rules were practically the foundation of the existing Civil Service. It was true that previous to my administration some slight attempt had been made at betterment but it was only tentative and partial. In this work Colonel Burt was very active and advice was sought from Mr. George William Curtis, D. B. Eaton and Rev. Dr. McCosh of Princeton University. The establishment of this service precluded the idea of making appointments simply for political reasons and no attempt was made during my administration to build up a local political machine in the city of New York, and excepting the especially confidential positions in the Custom House, no removals were made except for cause.

Upon my appointment as Collector, it was necessary for me to secure bondsmen who would justify in the amount of \$400,000. Hon. S. B. Chittenden of Brooklyn, Marshall O. Roberts of New York, William Walter Phelps and Hugh Allen each justified in the sum of \$100,000. The latter came to me voluntarily and tendered his services, as he said in recognition of a small service that I had rendered him some years before. He was a young man connected with the

transportation business on the canals when I was in the Assembly. During that time he was severely attacked (and I thought unjustly) by a Member of Assembly by the name of Miliken. Allen assaulted Miliken in the Assembly Chamber and was arraigned at the bar for contempt and punished. I had witnessed the affair and pleaded for a mild sentence. After a while Mr. Allen died and the other three bondsmen assumed the responsibility. Soon after Marshall O. Roberts died and then Mr. Chittenden said to Mr. Phelps, "Perhaps the Government will accept us, we won't trouble him to get another bondsman," and I did not have to procure another one. Notwithstanding the factional differences that were sharp and active when the campaign was on, my friendly relations with Arthur and Cornell continued. Mr. Conkling expressed strong regret that I permitted the use of my name for Collector against his friend Arthur, as he had favored my confirmation for Surveyor. I was not surprised at that and I have no doubt that he was perhaps justified, but I could not, of course, explain to him or his friends my embarrassment or the secrets of the administration.

General Arthur was nominated in 1880 for Vice-President on the ticket with General Garfield for President. I had several conferences with him during the campaign and he continued to be Chairman of the State Central Committee. I have no doubt that the Customs Service was as efficient in the campaign as it ever had been before. Any inquiries made to me with regard to the campaign I would send to the Committee, and no complaint was ever made to me for failure to respond to reasonable demands. Hon. Thomas C. Platt was Chairman of the Executive Committee.

Upon the retirement of President Hayes from office, I addressed the following letters to himself and Mrs. Hayes:

CUSTOM HOUSE, NEW YORK,

Collector's Office,

March 4, 1881.

10 o'clock A. M.

Dear Mr. President.— I take this occasion to most earnestly thank you for the consideration and support you have unvaryingly given me since I entered upon the discharge of the duties of Collector of this Port. While those duties have been onerous and at times burdensome I have been sustained by the knowledge that yourself and the Secretary of the Treasury had full confidence in my purpose to so administer the office as to reflect credit upon your administration. If I have in any degree failed to accomplish in the way of reform all that you thought possible and desirable, it has not been from want of an honest purpose but rather from inability to overcome obstacles in my pathway. I shall ever remember your kindnesses and trust that in your retirement from the great office which you have filled so acceptably to the Nation you will receive the fullest meed of praise which so justly you deserve.

Very Sincerely Yours,

E. A. MERRITT.

Hon. R. B. Hayes,

President of the United States,

Washington, D. C.

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20 East 33rd St.,

New York, March 4, 1881.

Dear Mrs. Hayes.— I take the occasion of your retirement from the "White House" over which you have presided with such grace and dignity, in view of all the people and to their acceptance, to thank you for courtesies extended. You have wielded an influence which will last as long as our government shall endure. Your fidelity to what Republican simplicity required and your firm adherence to the cause of temperance with which your name must ever be prominently identified will embalm your memory as one who having a great opportunity wisely and grandly improved it for the good of humanity.



Mrs. Merritt joins me in wishing you, your noble husband, and children, long and happy lives.

Most Sincerely yours,

E. A. MERRITT.

Mrs. R. B. Hayes,  
Fremont, Ohio.

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The former President replied to my letter as follows:

Fremont, Ohio.

11 March, 1881.

My dear General.—Your kind letter of the 4th finds me here. I have only time to thank you for what you have done — for all you have done, which is very great, for me and my administration, and to assure you of my sense of obligation, and my very warm personal friendship.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

R. B. HAYES,

Gen. E. A. Merritt,

P. S. We are all very, very happy. H.

Freemant, O.  
11 March 1881

My Dear General:

Your kind letter of  
the 4th inst. has been here. I have also  
time to thank you for what you  
have done - for all you have done,  
which is very great, for we all  
very acknowledge it, and to assure  
you of my sense of obligation,  
and my warm personal friendship.

With best wishes

Sincerely

Gen E. A. Merrill

R. B. May Jr

P.S. We are very very happy. H



**CHAPTER XI**  
**CONSUL-GENERAL TO LONDON**



## CHAPTER XI

### Consul-General to London

I continued to hold the position as Collector until the spring of 1881, when President Garfield nominated William H. Robertson, who was a member of the State Senate, for my position, and nominated me to be Consul-General at London, England. This movement was a great surprise to all parties generally, as well as to myself. One day a Mr. Douglas, Special Agent of the Treasury Department, a relative of Secretary Windom's, called upon me with a message from the Secretary to furnish certain information that he might require and that he would soon visit New York and see me.

I said, "Possibly they contemplate a change."

"No," he said, "it is not even thought of, and I had a talk with the Secretary just before I left Washington and you will not be disturbed. In fact the Secretary greatly relies upon you," or words to that effect.

While I was out at lunch that same day I received a message from the Associated Press saying that my successor had been nominated and that I had been named Consul-General to London.

Mr. Robertson represented what was known as the Blaine element in New York, which at the National Convention led a bolt from the unit rule which had been adopted by the State Convention. Although a member of that convention, he made no protest against it. Upon arrival at the National Convention the matter of State instructions was brought up and the question whether delegates representing congressional districts could vote independently or be controlled by a ma-

jority of the State delegates and it was decided in favor of the former. He, with a number of others, joined with those who were in favor of individual voting and, of course, gave very great offense to Mr. Conkling and his friends as they voted for Mr. Blaine as against General Grant for third term. That night I proceeded to Washington to confer with the President and expressed some surprise at the hasty action and told him that had an intimation reached me that my holding the position was an embarrassment he could have had my resignation at any time. He went on to explain the situation to me, referring to several recent appointments he had made of Mr. Conkling's friends in New York to please Mr. Conkling and that the other side had felt that they were not fairly considered, and in order to balance the matter he felt constrained to do it even without consulting me, and that he had nominated me for a very important place and had great hope of what I might do to improve the Consular Service, and especially to soften it down. He thought that Mr. Conkling's friends had no reason to complain of this action because in nominating Mr. Robertson he did not remove a political friend of Mr. Conkling's. He had also made certain changes in the foreign service which gave offense to Mr. Conkling and General Grant's friends. Gen. Adam Badeau was Consul-General at London and he was nominated for Minister to Denmark and Nicholas Fish was removed from the position which he held and there was a sort of general reconstruction. Mr. Sherman, who had been elected to the Senate, was very much opposed to this movement and was quite angry that this had been done without consulting him. In my first appointment against General Arthur he had been very bitterly assailed in consequence of it and he did not want a second fight, so to speak, and insisted that I ought to resist the change on the ground of a violation of the Civil



**JAMES A. GARFIELD**



THE S. S. V. V. V.  
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OF THE  
S. S. V. V. V. AND  
S. S. V. V. V. FOUNDATIONS.

Service, and besides it was in the middle of my term. I had so well satisfied the business interests of New York that my appointment had been justified.

I said to Mr. Sherman that it was not for me to know what their plans were, but that if there was an attack on my official record, I should resist. There had been some charges made by my factional enemies, in fact inquiries had been made in the Senate as to whether I had not violated some of the Civil Service rules with regard to appointments. I told the President that if anything of that kind was involved in this action, and I was to receive a blow, I would take it in the face, and he assured me that there was nothing of the kind and that he had every confidence in my ability and that my services had been entirely satisfactory as Collector. Only a very few days before he had an interview with Mr. Conkling, and had informed him of his purpose to make the appointment of his friends in New York and Mr. Conkling wanted to know when he was going to change the Custom House officials, and he said that he hadn't any purpose to act upon them. Mr. Conkling claimed afterward that he promised him he wouldn't do it without consulting him and there was a question of veracity raised between them.

Shortly after Mr. Robertson's nomination, I received the following letter from Senator Sherman:

UNITED STATES SENATE CHAMBER,

Washington, March 31, 1881.

My dear Sir.—If Senator Conkling should place his opposition to the confirmation of Robertson on the ground that it would operate to the removal of a competent Collector without cause and during his term of office it would embarrass me. It was my purpose and I was fully prepared to contend that you were appointed for good reasons and that you have by your official record justified your appointment. Your sudden removal without cause by a President supposed to be

friendly leaves you in a bad position and if acquiesced in by me leaves me as deserting you when your removal comes from the President and supporting you when it is urged by Senator Conkling. What I wish to know from you definitely is whether you assent to the proposed changes including your appointment as Consul to London. I wish your answer so I may use it if occasion demands.

Very truly yours,

Gen. E. A. Merritt,  
Collector.

JOHN SHERMAN.

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I replied to the Senator's letter as follows:

CUSTOM HOUSE, NEW YORK,

Collector's Office,

April 4th, 1881.

Dear Senator.—Yours of the 31st ult. is received. As you know I did not seek my present position and accepted it with great reluctance and upon the solicitation of President Hayes. For many reasons I would have been greatly gratified had the new administration deemed it wise to allow me to complete the term of my commission. But as in the past, I now concede the right of the President to select the person whom he desires to administer so important a position as that of Collector of the Port of New York, which by the concentration of business here has become national in its scope. I cannot therefore antagonize the purposes of the President in the proposed changes.

On grounds personal to myself I could not demur to his action since both the President and the Secretary of the Treasury have expressed satisfaction with the discharge of my present duties, so far as known to them, and my nomination to an important business position abroad is a further manifestation of the President's confidence in me. I hope therefore that you will be relieved from any embarrassment and will feel at liberty to favor the confirmation of the present nomination for the Collectorship without reference to my personal relations with it.

Though my nomination to the position of Consul General at London was entirely unexpected I shall in case of confirmation accept the position since its duties are closely related to those which I have



JOHN SHERMAN

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officially performed for several years here and I feel that I could creditably discharge them.

I highly appreciate your friendship and the confidence expressed in your letter and I hope that opportunities may be granted to make some return for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,

E. A. MERRITT.

Thereafter I received this reply to my letter of April 4th:

SENATE LIBRARY COMMITTEE,

Washington, April 5, 81.

Hon. E. A. Merritt,

New York.

My dear Sir.—Your letter of the 4th is received. It will relieve me from the embarrassment under which I was placed, and I shall therefore support the nomination of Robertson on the ground that it is made with your consent, and does not imply any reproach or discredit to you. And, secondly, because I believe from the information I have, that he is an able and honest man who will conduct your great office for the best interest of the public.

Very truly yours,

JOHN SHERMAN.

Senator George F. Edmunds, a good friend of mine in the United States Senate, wrote me this letter:

U. S. SENATE CHAMBER,

Washington, 11 April, 1881.

Dear Sir.—With a view to acting understandingly in the matter of the New York Collectorship, I will thank you to inform me whether the proposed transfer of yourself to England and the appointment of another person in your place as Collector is with your consent. An early answer will oblige.

Yours truly,

GEO. F. EDMUNDS.

Gen. E. A. Merritt,

Custom House,

New York City.

The following is my reply to Senator Edmund's letter :

CUSTOM HOUSE, NEW YORK,

Collector's Office,

April 18, 1881.

Dear Senator.—Your letter was duly received. While I should have been greatly gratified had the new administration deemed it wise to allow me to remain in my present position during the term of my commission, still the changes having been proposed to the Senate I assent to them. It would not be becoming to me, on personal grounds, to object to the course proposed, as I do now, as in the past, concede to the President the right to select the person whom he desires to administer this office, which in a large measure has become national in importance.

If confirmed as Consul-General to London I shall gladly accept the position. Thanking you for the consideration shown by writing me on the subject,

I am, Sincerely Yours,

E. A. MERRITT.

Hon. Geo. F. Edmunds,

U. S. Senate,

Washington, D. C.

General Garfield, in making up his cabinet, intended to give New York a proper representation, and tendered the post of Secretary of the Navy to Hon. Levi P. Morton who, under the influence of Mr. Conkling, declined it on the ground that he ought to be Secretary of the Treasury, and that New York was entitled to the treasuryship, and his influence was strong enough to induce him to decline the appointment. He was afterward appointed Minister to France and accepted it, which, of course, was not pleasing to Mr. Conkling. Thomas L. James of New York, who had been Postmaster in New York, was finally nominated as Postmaster-General as a friend of Mr. Conkling's without his being consulted, and the nomination of Mr. Robertson for

Collector followed only a very few days after, and of course was a great surprise to Senator Conkling and Senator Platt, and the feeling became very bitter.

When Senator Platt arrived in New York he sent for me to learn whether I was a party to this arrangement in any way, and said that if I would resist the proposed change they would stand by me and make a fight for me in the Senate. I told him I would be willing to assent to any arrangement that could be made with the President, through the White House, that I had no special backing outside, that this situation was entirely a surprise to me and that I would prefer to hold my position as Collector until my term expired rather than to accept any position which the President had in his gift, and I stated to him that before these changes had occurred, I had suggested to Mr. Blaine that it was probable that he would want to recognize Mr. Robertson, as he was Robertson's friend, and suggested that he might be made District Attorney of the southern district of New York, which, as I understood it, was a more lucrative position than the collectorship; that I understood General Woodford, whose term as District Attorney would expire, would be glad to receive a judgeship. I said further, that I knew that the percentage of fees of moities of fines, forfeitures and penalties were still received by the District Attorney, although the rule as to moities had been cut off from Customs officials. He told me that he would be very glad to do that and wanted to know whether I thought Robertson would accept it. I had had a previous conference with Robertson and he had said, "Let them offer it to me and see," but Mr. Garfield nominated General Woodford for reappointment without consulting Mr. Blaine. Hon. Wayne McVeagh, Attorney-General in the Cabinet, and Mr. James, Postmaster-General, endeavored to compose this



difficulty between Mr. Conkling and the President, and an interview was arranged at which they were to be present. The time was fixed for the interview and Mr. McVeagh and Mr. James called upon Mr. Conkling to go with him to the White House. While there, Mr. Conkling received a telegram from Governor Cornell advising him to consent to the confirmation of Mr. Robertson. Mr. Conkling was offended and seemed to think that his friends were deserting him and he refused to go to the White House or have anything more to do with President Garfield.

This part of the statement was made to me by Mr. James, himself, and he was forced into the position of either standing by the President, who had appointed him Postmaster-General, or resign his position and stand by Mr. Conkling, and he accepted the former alternative, and remained as Postmaster-General. When it was found that this difficulty could not be harmonized, Senator Platt, who had been elected Senator by what were called the "Half-Breeds" in the Legislature against Mr. Conkling's candidate, Senator Crowley, sought their support and gave assurances that they should be well treated so far as his action was concerned in the Senate, in case they were nominated for Federal positions, making only one exception, and that was, if Senator Robertson was nominated for a Cabinet position he would feel constrained to oppose him, or he would have to differ with Mr. Conkling, which he did not want to do. Mr. Robertson's attitude in the National Convention had so embittered Mr. Conkling that he insisted upon their rejecting him for this position. It was at the proposed interview with the President that it was understood that the names the President had sent in of Mr. Conkling's friends should be withdrawn and he would make a recast of the appointments and nominate Mr. Robertson for District Attorney. Mr. Conkling was con-

sulted about them and he suggested that if anything was done for Robertson he should be given some position out of the country and that if he was nominated he would go into the cloak room and hold his nose while he was being confirmed. The situation became so unpleasant to Mr. Platt that he decided to resign his Senatorship rather than have a controversy with the administration for the ensuing period of four years, and so informed Mr. Conkling.

Mr. Conkling said, "Well, if you are going to resign I shall."

The next day, I believe, they forwarded their resignations to Governor Cornell. The break, therefore, between them and the President was complete and of course caused great excitement and surprise. The opponents of Mr. Conkling learning of that fact, secured an adjournment as soon as the State Senate met, the effect of which was to delay the action of the Legislature in electing successors for two weeks. I have referred to this action of their resignation especially because it was understood that Mr. Conkling was the prime mover of the purpose to resign, whereas, as I understood it, the proposition was made by Senator Platt, and in that case Mr. Conkling was the "Me too."

The friends of Mr. Conkling in New York were very much disappointed, and as the majority, as they supposed, of the Republicans of the Legislature were his friends and had elected Mr. Platt to the Senate, they could be re-elected and urged them to stand as candidates, and they finally did so, and the Republicans failed to hold a caucus. Then the contest took place in the Legislature. The opposing candidates were Hon. Chauncey M. Depew and Hon. William A. Wheeler.

Mr. Conkling claimed that he had not the slightest intention of being a candidate for re-election when he resigned,

but when he visited New York he was surrounded by so many of his friends who were practically charging him with abandoning them, that he relinquished the idea of not being a candidate. The result is well known, that after a long controversy the names of Depew and Wheeler were withdrawn and enough of the Conkling side, who were weary of the contest, joined in electing Elbridge G. Lapham and Warner Miller to the Senate.

Before this controversy ended General Garfield was assassinated. The nominations as they had been put in were confirmed but by reason of Mr. Robertson's position in the Senate I was asked to remain in the Collector's office until he could be relieved to assume the duties of his office, which was several weeks. While this controversy lasted and Mr. Robertson's nomination was under consideration, there was an active movement among the merchants and business men of New York, without my concurrence, consent or knowledge, to prevent my removal. There were a great many complimentary things said and favorable reports made concerning me, and the following petition was forwarded to the Senate:

To the Honorable James A. Garfield, President of the United States:

The undersigned, merchants and others, identified with the commercial interests of the City of New York, respectfully represent that the public welfare demands that the duties pertaining to the high and responsible position of Collector of the Port of New York should be discharged in a manner that, while securing the economical and faithful collection of the revenues will also protect the public from the nervous embarrassments, delays and losses that have frequently been caused by the appointment, for purely political reasons, of men unacquainted with the duties of the office.

Your petitioners would therefore respectfully urge the retention in said position for the full term for which he was appointed of General E. A. Merritt, whose close attention to the business of the office has

made him thoroughly familiar therewith and has enabled him to discharge its duties with fidelity to the government and satisfaction to the commercial public.

This petition was signed by about two thousand merchants, bankers and other representative citizens of New York city. Among the bankers signing, appeared the following names:

Benj. B. Sherman	Pres. Merchants National Bank
J. D. Vermilye	Merchants National Bank
W. R. Jenks	Bank of America
F. D. Tappan	Gallatin National Bank
N. F. Palmer	Leather National Bank
John Jay Cisco	Banker
Jno. Phelps	Phelps, Stokes, Co.
Chas. M. Frey	Bank of New York
Wm. Dowd	Bank of North America
J. D. Fisk	Marine National Bank
Ambrose Swan	Vice-Pres. Marine National Bank.
Hatch & Foote	Bankers.

When it came to my knowledge that this petition and others had been sent to Washington, I wrote President Garfield this letter:

CUSTOM HOUSE, NEW YORK,

Collector's Office,

April 7th, 1881.

Dear Mr. President.—I see by the papers that the Board of Trade and Transportation have forwarded petitions in favor of my retention in office. I wish to say to you that this movement was started without my knowledge or assent, and so far as I can learn, without the knowledge or encouragement of any personal or political friends of my own, and I trust that it may not in any way embarrass you. I suppose there may be two or three purposes involved in the matter which do not in any way relate to myself personally or to the political considerations involved in the change.

In response to a letter from Mr. Sherman, I wrote him most

freely and fully, relieving him from any supposed embarrassment which he may have felt.

In view of the publicity now given to the matter, I deemed it best to write you. Very respectfully,

E. A. MERRITT,

Hon. James A. Garfield,

Collector.

President,

Executive Mansion,

Washington, D. C.

The following reply was received from President Garfield:

EXECUTIVE MANSION,

Washington,

April 11, 1881.

Dear General.—Yours of the 7th inst. came duly to hand, and contents are noted.

I am gratified at the spirit of your letter. I assure you that your nomination to the Consulate at London was intended as a compliment, and the change from the Custom House to that office implies no reflection whatever, upon the efficiency of your service as Collector. My chief object was to have the Collectorship settled for four years rather than to have the vacancy occur at the middle of my term.

With thanks for your letter, I am,

Very truly yours,

Gen'l E. A. Merritt,

J. A. GARFIELD.

Collector of Customs,

New York City.

I also wrote Secretary Windom as follows:

CUSTOM HOUSE, NEW YORK,

Collector's Office,

April 7th, 1881.

My dear Sir.—In response to my letter to Mr. Sherman he stated that he felt entirely relieved and would favor the confirmation of Robertson.

EXECUTIVE MANSION  
WASHINGTON.

April 11, 1887.

Dear General:

Yours of the 7<sup>th</sup>  
inst. came duly to hand, and  
contents are noted

I am gratified at the  
spirit of your letter. I  
assure you that your nomi-  
nation to the Consulate at  
London was intended as a  
compliment, and the change  
from the Custom House to that  
Office implies no reflection  
whatever, upon the efficiency

of your service as Collector.  
My chief object was to have  
the collectorship settled for  
four years rather than to  
have the vacancy occur at  
the middle of my term.

With thanks for your  
letter,  
I am, Very truly yours  
J. A. Garfield

Genl. E. A. Mewitt,  
Collector of Customs,  
New York City.

In this connection I wish now to state, also, that this movement of the business men of New York has been carried on, until yesterday, without my knowledge, and, so far as I can learn, without any encouragement or assistance of personal or political friends of my own. It is proper that I should say this much, to the end that there may be no misapprehension as to the position I occupy in regard to the matter.

Very respectfully yours,

E. A. MERRITT,

Collector.

Hon. William Windom,  
Secretary of the Treasury,  
Washington, D. C.

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The following letter was written to Claflin & Company by direction of President Garfield:

EXECUTIVE MANSION,

Washington,

April 11, 1881.

Gentlemen.—In the many duties crowding upon him, the President finds it impossible to respond personally to your favor of the 8th instant, but he directs me to acknowledge its receipt and to thank you for the information its contains.

He also wishes me to say that the change in the office of Collector implies no criticism upon the efficiency of General Merritt, but was promoted by a desire to have the Collectorship settled for four years rather than to have the vacancy occur in the middle of his term.

Very respectfully,

Your obd't svt.,

J. Stanley Brown,

Private Secretary.

Messrs:

H. B. Claflin & Co.,  
New York City.

Various comments were made by public press and individuals as to the reason for the unexpected course taken by General Garfield at that time. I have this version of it from



Mr. Thomas Nichols, who was private secretary to General Garfield during his campaign, and was also made a Commissioner of Indian Affairs and for a time remained with the President at the White House. He said that the night before the nomination of Mr. Robertson was sent to the Senate, Mr. Blaine, who was Secretary of State, called upon the President, who was at his dinner, and the President asked him to call about ten o'clock. Mr. Blaine did so and assured the President that the nominations he had already made in New York were all Mr. Conkling's friends, and that his friends were being ignored and very serious complaints had reached him and that something must be done to satisfy these gentlemen or he could not be of use to the administration, or words to that effect. He was very much in earnest and greatly disturbed about the situation.

They went over the list of appointments to see what could be done and the most important position in New York at that time with which the most patronage was connected was the Custom House, and he insisted upon the appointment of Judge Robertson and they made up the program that night by which I was to be transferred to London and General Badeau, a particular friend of General Grant's, as Minister to Denmark. That the nominations were sent in the next day and that although this appointment properly belonged to the Treasury Department, Mr. Windom was not consulted with regard to it and was greatly surprised at the nomination. This information I had directly from Mr. Windom and he expressed very great regret and disappointment at the course which was pursued at that time. It was reported against the President also, that he had ignored the only request that General Grant had made of him for an appointment, and that was the retention of General Badeau as Consul-General at London. That was not correct at that

time, as I met General Badeau in the White House the morning that I visited the President after my nomination, and the General then told me that he regretted very much that he had not presented a letter from General Grant; that he had been in Washington for some little time and was waiting for a favorable opportunity, but that he had not yet presented it, so that the removal of General Badeau was made before General Grant's request was received. While the controversy in regard to the re-election of Mr. Conkling was pending, charges were made, of course, that the administration was interfering, and they were very sensitive about it and their feeling became so marked that leading men did not dare visit the President. The friends of Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Depew of course were very anxious to secure the co-operation of the President and I was so situated that I could visit him without exciting any suspicion and so I was an intermediary. The President had a cottage at Elberon and on the Wednesday before he was shot I visited him at his cottage to post him with regard to the situation at Albany and see whether he could or would feel justified in giving any assurance as to what would be done in case of the success of the anti-Conkling candidates. He assured me that he could not in any way interfere in the matter, that he had become convinced that he had made a great mistake in making these changes at that time, that he had not anticipated any such controversy as had arisen and, of course, he thought the Conkling people were not justified in their hostility on account of what he had done. He denied to me that he had made any such statement to Mr. Conkling as had been represented in regard to promising not to act without consulting him. He assured me of warm support in my new position and that he was satisfied there should be some radical reforms in the Consular Service and that he expected to get great assistance through me as Consul-General at London.

One rather amusing incident occurred while I was in Washington on a visit to President Garfield. I was invited to lunch with his family. His mother, who had become quite an interested listener to our talk, suddenly, without any preliminary remark said: "James, why did you remove this man from office?" He was temporarily embarrassed but finally explained it as well as he could, which was very amusing to me.

The following letters passed between Secretary Windom and myself upon the closing of my accounts as Collector:

OFFICE OF COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS,

New York, August 29, 1881.

The Hon. William Windom, Secretary of the Treasury:


Sir.—I have the honor to inform you that I have transmitted to the department all statements of the various accounts which appertain to the receipts and disbursements of the Collector of the Port of New York, and as disbursing agent up to and including the 31st day of July last, at which date I ceased to be Collector; and to report that I have turned over to the Assistant Treasurer all balances due to the United States upon said accounts. \* \* \* I also respectfully state that during the time I had charge of the office, viz., from July 20, 1878, to and including July 31, 1881, I received the sum of \$397,385,772.78 as follows:

For duty from Customs	\$372,264,732.76
For tonnage, hospital dues, &c.,	4,125,111.97

And also for purposes of disbursement \$20,995,929.05, every dollar of which has been paid out for the various accounts for which it was received, and for which vouchers are on file in the department. The total expenses in all the departments in connection with the collection of Customs in this district during my term of service were \$7,354,460.92.

I have to request that you will cause as early an adjustment of my accounts as may be practicable. I wish again to thank you for the consideration you have shown me since my official relations began,

Plymouth, O.  
2 Aug. 1881

My dear General: 

I thank you for your note and  
the newspaper cutting of your Report.  
It is a noble showing - very creditable  
to you - very gratifying to me, and  
a confirmation of things on which, when  
I congratulate you, I feel that I  
have a personal interest in it almost  
equal to yours. The Country has indeed  
reason to rejoice. It is a complete  
answer to the plausible objections  
which ingenious people present  
to that Reform of the Civil Service  
which is so essential. To

The ultimate success of our Re-  
publican Experiment.

Of course you know my views as  
to your being released. The downfall  
of the Machine is a great gain. Let  
it be seen to that no new machine  
is set up in the ruins of the old  
one. In fine you have

more what I desired - all that  
I desired - more than I had  
a right to expect, and I  
thank you with all my heart.

Sincerely

Hon E. A. Merritt RB Hayes

and to assure you of my continued interest in the successful administration of your department.

I am,

Very Respectfully Yours,

E. A. MERRITT,

Late Collector of Customs.

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TREASURY DEPARTMENT.

August 31, 1881.

Gen. E. A. Merritt, New York:

My dear Sir.— I have your favor of the 29th inst., informing me that you have transmitted to the department all statements of the various accounts which appertain to the receipts and disbursements of the Collector of the Port of New York during your term of service, and requesting as early an adjustment of your accounts as may be practicable.

In reply I have to say that your request shall receive as early attention as the business of the department will permit.

I cannot close the very agreeable official relations which have existed between us without assuring you, not only of my sincere personal regard, but also my high appreciation of the faithfulness and efficiency with which you have always discharged the difficult and important duties of your office.

Hoping you may enjoy the new position to which you have been assigned, and feeling assured that its duties will be ably and efficiently performed, I remain,

Very Respectfully Yours,

WILLIAM WINDOM,

Secretary.

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After making up my final report as Collector, I forwarded a copy to former President Hayes, who had appointed me to the office, and received from him the following acknowledgment:

Fremont, O., August 2, 1881.

My dear General.— I thank you for your note and the newspaper cutting of your report. It is a noble showing — very creditable to

you — very gratifying to me, and a condition of things on which while I congratulate you, I feel that I have a personal interest in it almost equal to yours. The Country has especial reason to rejoice. It is a complete answer to the plausible objections which ingenious people present to that Reform of the Civil Service which is so essential to the ultimate success of our Republican Experiment.

Of course you know my views as to your being relieved. The downfall of the machine is a great gain. Let it be seen to that no new machine is set up on the ruins of the old one.

In fine you have done what I desired — all that I desired — more than I had a right to expect, and I thank you with all my heart.

Sincerely,

R. B. HAYES.

Hon. E. A. Merritt.

Before leaving for London I visited Washington for the purpose of receiving final instructions. President Garfield who had been shot by Guiteau was very low and his life was despaired of. James G. Blaine was Secretary of State, and at his request I remained some time and spent a day at his house. He talked very freely and anxiously about the President's condition and had less confidence of the President's recovery than the encouraging bulletins indicated. In considering the political consideration in case the President should not survive his wound, Mr. Blaine thought that General Arthur would probably not change the Cabinet. To this suggestion I expressed the decided opinion that his relations to Senator Conkling were such that the latter would insist on a change.

It so happened that I did not personally know Mr. Conkling very well until the factional divisions had become quite pronounced. So far as I had any relations with him, they were always personally pleasant. He sometimes would be quite sarcastic about my friends in my presence but never appeared to have any personal feeling toward me, although I was with the other faction of the party.

At the State Convention in Syracuse when contesting delegates were sent up from New York city, Mr. Greeley was Chairman of the regular organization. At that time Mr. Conkling was the leader of the opposition. The Committee on Contesting Seats reported in favor of giving each delegation half a vote, and Mr. Conkling took position against it, and the result was that the contesting delegation was seated and Mr. Greeley and the delegates supporting him retired from the convention. With them went delegates from different parts of the State, among others a portion of the delegation from St. Lawrence county. I was in as a delegate from Franklin county.

Mr. Conkling, in his speech to show his purpose to be liberal with those who did not agree with him, turned toward me in the convention, as I happened to be standing, and said that he hoped to have the pleasure of seconding the nomination of the gentleman whom he had in his eye. I shook my head and he said, "It will not be thrown at the feet of unwilling St. Lawrence."

I do not recall the exact majority which the Conkling element had in the convention. After an adjournment was taken a committee from that side, some of whom were personally friendly to me, came and desired that I should accept the nomination for Comptroller on the ticket, saying that if I would consent to it, the name of Mr. Hopkins of Buffalo would not be urged. I declined to accede to the proposition, although I felt very confident that the ticket that year would be elected. I did not see how to separate myself from Mr. Greeley and Governor Fenton without their being parties to an arrangement of this kind. Mr. Hopkins was nominated and elected.

J. Hilton Scribner, who was of our faction, was offered the position of candidate for Secretary of State. He at first was



disposed to decline to accept the nomination unless some other of our faction should go on the ticket, and especially desired me to do so. A few of us surrounded him and urged him to accept the candidacy. He was nominated and it was then feared that the delegates from New York, under the leadership of Mr. Greeley would, perhaps, oppose the ticket, or at least would be luke-warm in its support. They had a real grievance and I thought then, and think now, that they were not well treated. An effort was then made to get Mr. Greeley and his friends to support the ticket, with a good many assurances outside that they would hereafter be better treated, and I was urged to see Mr. Greeley and labor with him and present the views of our friends in the country with reference to the ticket and urge him to preside at a meeting to be held in New York city. He was very reluctant at first to do so, but he finally consented and the Republican ticket was elected.

Mr. Conkling was very peculiar in many ways and very strong in his feeling when thwarted in his purpose. Mr. Lamb, Editor of the Troy Times, in the absence of Mr. Francis, who was Minister to Greece, told me that Mr. Conkling scolded him very sharply for having suggested some policy on the part of the Republican party without consulting him, and said in substance that the newspaper press of the party had no right to criticise the representative men who were leaders of the party and holding official positions.

While the matter of my confirmation to the position as Collector was pending, some of General Arthur's friends had learned that certain Senators who had heretofore supported Mr. Conkling in his controversy were disposed to break away and favor my confirmation. So at a conference it was decided to send Mr. Clinton Wheeler, who was Police Commissioner of the city of New York, to inform Mr. Conkling

and to make some suggestions about the contest. He told me that he went with some trepidation, knowing the peculiarities of Mr. Conkling, and although he was a real friend of his, he did not know how he might be received. He called upon him and after general conversation stated that he came there representing his friends and expressed the fear that Mr. Conkling was going to be disappointed in some of the support he anticipated, and I think gave some names.

Mr. Conkling responded, "My friends sent you here to inform me as to the position of my friends in the Senate. You may tell my friends that when I need their advice I will send for it."

Mr. Sanders, Senator from Nebraska, who had previously voted with Mr. Conkling in the rejection of Roosevelt, went to him and said: "I think this controversy ought not to be protracted, and I cannot stand with you in this contest and propose to vote for the confirmation of General Merritt."

Mr. Conkling said, "I expect every one of my friends will stand by me."

Mr. Sanders said, "Gen. Merritt's brother lives in my State and has been a good friend and for that and personal reasons also I have concluded to favor his confirmation."

Of course, Mr. Conkling was very much offended and Senator Sanders afterward told me that Mr. Conkling would not see him for three months.

Several other Senators occupied a similar position to Senator Sanders and among them Mr. Morrill, of Vermont. I was in the Fifth Avenue Hotel a short time after and met Senator Morrill, who was just about departing for a trip to Europe, and finding that Mr. Conkling was in the hotel he decided to call upon him and pay his respects. He did so and when he came out of his room I noticed that he was very much affected and I thought that he was ill, and inquired if such was the case.

"No," he said, "I am not ill, but I am feeling very badly. I have just called upon Mr. Conkling in a friendly way to pay my respects and he at once began to abuse me in the most savage way for having favored your nomination."

He said, "Mr. Conkling, if I supposed you entertained such feelings I certainly should not have troubled you with my presence."

After I was appointed Surveyor and was confirmed by the consent of Mr. Conkling, I was in Washington and wanted to call upon him and pay my respects. I learned that he had made a rule not to receive cards or calls while the Senate was in session. I went to the Capitol and sent my card in and asked him to indicate on it at what time and place it would be convenient for him to receive a call from me. He sent a messenger out and asked me to come into the Vice-President's room and he left his seat and came out and it was so unexpected to me that I was somewhat embarrassed. I said to him that I did not desire to disturb him during the session.

"There is not much danger of your disturbing me, sir," he replied. We sat down and had a long conversation with regard to the political situation, especially in New York, and he gave me his opinion not only about his most important friends, General Arthur and Mr. Cornell, but those who differed with him and especially George William Curtis.

Upon another occasion, while at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York, I met Hon. Alonzo Taft, who had been Attorney-General in General Grant's Cabinet, the father of President Taft, and as we were talking in the office, Mr. Conkling came up and inquired of Mr. Taft if he had just come down from Ohio. He said he had been down to the Commencement at Yale College.

Mr. Conkling then said, "Tell me, did Hayes make a

speech at the Commencement as had been reported in the newspapers?"

Mr. Taft replied: "I think it has been pretty correctly reported in the New York Tribune."

In a sneering way, Mr. Conkling referred to the Tribune and then said, "If Hayes made a speech as reported, and Solomon were here, he would revise one of his wise sayings, that 'there is nothing new under the sun.'"

It appears that President Hayes, in making a speech at the commencement exercises, referred to the President of the University and complimented him, and said that upon certain questions of interest he had asked his advice.

Another incident, as reported to me by Governor Fenton, was that when the subject of the confirmation of Thomas L. Murphy for Collector was pending Mr. Fenton made a vigorous speech in opposition and quoted the position which Mr. Murphy had occupied with regard to certain meetings and transactions in New York, as reported especially in the New York Times. Mr. Fenton stated that it could be found on the files in the Congressional Library. After a recess Mr. Conkling in his reply, while scoring Governor Fenton and his faction, charged that Mr. Fenton had misled the Senate and made statements that were false and that the references of Governor Fenton would be found to be false. Of course Mr. Fenton was very much astonished. After the matter was disposed of, Mr. Murphy was confirmed and Mr. Fenton went to the Congressional Librarian and procured a certificate that the files were mutilated during the recess and took that into the Senate to vindicate the statement he had already made.

After his retirement from the Senate and entering upon his law practice in New York, Senator Conkling was called upon to represent the firm importing the apollinaris water, upon

which subject there was a controversy as to whether the water was a natural spring or artificial water. Mr. Folger was Secretary of the Treasury in General Arthur's Cabinet and he said he could not personally go to the Treasury Department because Mr. Folger was a particular friend, but that he would look over any papers that might be presented. Col. George C. Tichenor was a special agent of the Treasury Department and had made a thorough investigation of the subject in Germany and reported in favor of its being a natural mineral spring water. Mr. Conkling took his report and commended it as governing the case, and the decision of the Secretary of the Treasury was in accordance with this report. It was stated to me, I can't say upon what authority, that his fee for that signature was \$10,000.

As Colonel Tichenor was about to sail for Europe he received a note from Mr. Conkling asking him to call at his office. Colonel Tichenor had been a very warm supporter of John Sherman in opposition to Mr. Conkling, and Tichenor did not understand the purpose of the visit and regretted lack of acquaintance with Mr. Conkling, to which Mr. Conkling replied, "I know you very well." He had a very pleasant interview and commended him very much for his work in the Treasury Department, and when he went on board the purser of the ship inquired for him and advised him that there was a barrel of oysters which had been presented to him.

While I was in London a gentleman called upon me one day to make some inquiries about Mr. Conkling as a lawyer and his prominence in the profession. I asked him the purpose of his inquiry and he said that he was interested in a suit in which Mr. Conkling had been called in as counsel and he had put in what he regarded as a large fee for services. I asked him how much and he said \$50,000. I gave him in-

formation as to Mr. Conkling's prominence, and said to him that if Mr. Conkling had put in a bill for that amount he would certainly expect it to be paid. The suit was one in which Com. Garrison's estate was interested and the controversy was over the question as to whether certain stocks belonged to the company or were individual property. The matter was settled by compromise.

While the controversy as to whether Mr. Tilden or Mr. Hayes would be elected President of the United States an electoral commission was appointed to settle the disputes in regard to Florida and Louisiana. Mr. Conkling was understood to favor the Democrats' claim and was ready to defend it and as I understand had prepared a speech. Mr. Spriggs, of Utica, a Democrat, and a friend of Mr. Conkling's, visited Washington to confer with him in regard to it. While there Governor Lucius Robinson, a Democrat, appointed Mr. Conkling's friend, Jas. F. Smythe, Superintendent of Insurance. This was done without Mr. Conkling's knowledge and he was very much offended because it would be charged that his course was influenced by the appointment of his friend. Mr. Smythe, at the time, was Chairman of the State Republican Committee. Mr. Spriggs said that after that he could do nothing more with Mr. Conkling.

Mr. Carpenter, Republican ex-Senator from Wisconsin, was employed by the Democratic National Committee and he was a warm friend of Mr. Conkling's. When the decision was reached in Florida I communicated the result to Mr. Conkling. He expressed surprise at the result and wanted to know what I thought the effect would be upon Louisiana, and I said I thought the same reasoning for favoring the Republican electors in Florida would apply in Louisiana. Mr. Rodney Daniels, of Buffalo, who was in Washington, told me that he overheard Mr. Carpenter's report to

Mr. Conkling, in which he said that he did not see how anybody with common sense could come to such a conclusion, and Mr. Conkling responded, "or uncommon sense either."

My recollection is that when the report of this electoral commission was made Mr. Conkling was absent and did not vote on the question. He afterward broke friendship with General Arthur while he was President and Mr. Cornell while he was Governor. It is said he referred to the former as the "stalled ox of the White House," and the latter as the "lizard on the hill." They had failed to do what he required.

## **CHAPTER XII**

### **LIFE IN LONDON**





## CHAPTER XII

### Life In London

I left for London September 3, 1881, to assume the duties of Consul-General. My wife and Miss Julia Crane accompanied me, and we took passage on the steamship "Britanic." President Garfield at that time was in a very critical condition. Before reaching Queenstown a meeting of the passengers was held, at which I presided, to adopt resolutions of sympathy which we intended to communicate on reaching the town. Rev. Joseph Parker, of London, the noted divine of Temple Church, and others, delivered addresses, and upon arrival the resolutions were sent by cable to the White House.

Upon arriving at Liverpool we took the Northwestern railway to London, reaching the city in the evening, and were met by Vice-Consul-General Nunn. We stopped at the Midland Grand Hotel, remaining several days. After visiting the Consular-General I paid my respects to our Minister, James Russell Lowell. We arrived on the 15th of September and on the 17th I was presented to the Lord Mayor of London, as is usual before entering upon official duties in that city, and entered upon the duties of my office.

President Garfield died on the 19th. Soon after receiving the news I was invited to meet Mr. Lowell and Gen. Adam Badeau at J. S. Morgan's bank to confer in regard to memorial services. It was decided to hold these services on Saturday afternoon of the 24th. Mr. Lowell had charge of the arrangements, including the speakers, etc., and Mr. Morgan secured Exeter Hall. Mr. Lowell suggested that I should speak, and I told him that I did not feel equal to the occasion,

that I was not accustomed to public speaking and that this would be a notable occasion and undoubtedly a very large gathering of representative literary men. I heard nothing from him until Friday, when one of the secretaries of the Legation called upon me to know what response I would make to Mr. Lowell's request that I should take part in the memorial services. He said that he had written me a letter which I had not received. I went immediately to the Legation and conferred with Mr. Lowell. He desired me to offer a resolution, saying that as I had just come from the United States and had personal acquaintance with the President, it was expected that I would take part. He said that Geo. W. Smalley, the correspondent of the New York Tribune, would prepare the resolutions. We went to Mr. Smalley's house and I consented to offer the first resolution.

I said to Mr. Lowell that if I could be permitted to put my speech in writing and read it I should feel less hesitation. He said that it would not be suitable, or words to that effect, as the occasion would be an extemporaneous affair. I suggested that if I could invite Bishop Simpson, the head of the Methodist Church in America, who was attending the ecumenical council, which was then being held in London, to second the resolution, I should be glad to do so. He represented the religious element of the United States and as I understood was a good friend of General Garfield. He gave his consent and I succeeded in getting Bishop Simpson's acceptance. The Bishop and I agreed how we would divide the subject. I told him what Mr. Lowell had said as to extemporaneous speaking, etc. This religious council was in session and there were a large number of American clergymen present and several applications had been made for an opportunity to speak, which Mr. Lowell had declined. He selected Moncure D. Conway, who had been a long time

resident of London, Rev. Dr. Channing, a son of the noted Unitarian minister, and Mr. J. S. Morgan, banker, who had also been a long time past in London. It was arranged that we were to meet in the room adjoining the hall before the services began. While there I heard Mr. Lowell inquire of an attendant whether he could procure a reading stand.

I said, "There is a railing inside of the platform and one would hardly be needed."

He said, "The fact is, I finally dared not trust myself and have put my address in writing."

It was a most finished and suitable address of course. I had to follow him with an extemporaneous address, with only such preparation as I could outline over night. I felt at the time that I had not been fairly treated. However, it is possible that I acquitted myself as well as though I had prepared a more extended written speech or address.

I presented the following resolution:

"Resolved, That in the death of President Garfield we have to deplore alike a great public misfortune and a loss personal to each of us; that the crime of political murder, which in all instances we abhor, has in this instance, without a conceivable motive or a single apologist, plunged a nation in lasting sorrow, taken from us a wise, firm, beloved chief magistrate of proved capacity for rule; and bereaved us of a fellow citizen, who leaves to Americans for all time to come an example of the simple manliness of a sincere life, of a death heroic in patient fortitude, and the priceless inheritance of a stainless memory."

In moving this resolution, I spoke as follows:

"I cannot refrain from saying a few words expressing my own feelings in support of this resolution. At this moment the remains of President Garfield are being rapidly conveyed to the distant shores of Lake Erie, there to find their last

resting place. The whole nation is in tears, and as American citizens we are convened to express our grief. It is unnecessary for me, speaking to Americans, to attempt a review of the noble life of the late President, or to speak in detail of his public services. President Garfield's life has been read as an open book; his heroism, his Christian fortitude, and his wonderful patience have been seen and admired these many weeks, and during that period his life has been recounted in palace and cottage, and has evoked a sympathy which it is no exaggeration to say is unparalleled.

"Upon that subject I need only remark that, although born in humble life, and compelled at an early age to engage in honest toil in order to aid in the support of his widowed mother and the family dependent upon her, young Garfield found time to study books, and became both a great general and a great statesman, receiving finally from the hands of the American people the crowning honor of being elected their President. The story of his life may be summed up by saying that he passed from the grade of a poor boy in the wilderness to the very highest station in the land. He was equally at home with the farm laborer, the scientific man, and the scholar. Such was the man whom we mourn to-day.

"On this occasion it would be improper to refer to anything which might be considered of a partisan character. In our great sorrow partisanship is hushed, and patriotic sympathy and brotherhood have taken its place. General Garfield was no less renowned as a scholar than as a soldier and statesman, but the great heart of the nation turns to his memory, not so much, perhaps, for his scholarly or his soldierly or his statesmanlike qualities, as for his rugged honesty, his simple manners, his genial goodheartedness, and the typical love which he displayed in all his domestic relations.

"I might mention an incident which illustrates in a remark-

able degree General Garfield's dependence upon Divine Providence. On the day of the death of the martyred Lincoln there was a large and excited gathering in the streets of New York. At that time there was understood to be a very disloyal element in the city, and the news that the President had just died evoked in the popular bosom a spirit of revenge. Menacing cries were heard, and even staid and experienced men were carried away by their feelings. At that moment Garfield stood forward on the platform unannounced, and, raising his hands to heaven, used these memorable words: 'Fellow citizens, clouds and darkness are round about Him. His pavilion is dark waters and thick clouds of the skies! Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne! Mercy and truth shall go before His face! Fellow citizens, God reigns, and the Government at Washington still lives.' The effect was magical. He turned the passions of the multitude in a new direction, and the danger of a popular tumult passed away.

"On this occasion, happily, we may repeat Garfield's own words 'God reigns, and the Government at Washington lives.' His successor, by the peaceful operation of the Constitution of the United States, has assumed office, and I deem it not improper for me to here say that our heartfelt sympathies go out to the new President in the distressing and sorrowful and trying circumstances in which he finds himself, confident as we are that from assurances already given, so far as in him lay, the aspirations, the hopes and the purposes of the late President will be carried out. A great deal has been put upon us. We ought to bear it like American citizens, and cordially extend our forbearance and our assistance to those who, for the time being, have to exercise executive authority."

When I took my seat Mr. Lowell in a most public and cordial manner came around and congratulated me and thanked me for my speech. I accepted it as an apology.

Bishop Simpson, in seconding the resolution, was very happy indeed, and was listened to with the greatest attention, and I think every American was very much pleased with his address. Mr. Lowell's, Mr. Channing's and Mr. Morgan's speeches were all delivered from manuscript.

The proceedings were published in pamphlet form by Mr. B. F. Stevens, the U. S. Despatch Agent, who was also in the printing business. A copy was printed on satin and presented to the Queen. The platform was filled by noted representatives of foreign countries, as well as the literary men of London, and a large number of Americans. The Diplomatic Corps was fully represented. The hall could accommodate 3,000 people and it was packed. The proceedings were opened by prayer by the Rev. Dr. Marshall of Mississippi.

The Sunday following, the Rev. Joseph Parker preached a most eloquent discourse in Temple Church to which Americans were especially invited, and reserved seats were provided. On the evening of the 26th, Rev. Archibald Campbell Tait, DD., Archbishop of Canterbury, held a special service at St. Martin's-in-the Fields, at which a large number of Americans were present.

Gen. A. Badeau, my predecessor, gave me a dinner, at which several of his friends were present. Among them was Thos. Hughes, the noted author, who was afterward made Judge of the Queen's Bench. He was the author of "Tom Brown at Rugby." He and his mother were interested in establishing a colony in Tennessee. He was very fond of America and Americans. We later attended an afternoon tea in his house in Grosvenor Square.

After leaving the Midland Grand Hotel we took rooms in the Tavistock Square near the residence of the late Charles Dickens. The foggy season commenced rather earlier than

usual and made it unpleasant for several weeks. It takes some time to become accustomed to a London fog. The unpleasantness is largely due to the smoke mingling with the mist. The fuel is soft coal, burned in open fire places, and the combustion therefore is very imperfect. Late in the winter my wife and Miss Crane went to Bishop Downs Spa, near Turnbridge Wells, about thirty miles southeast of London, where they found it very pleasant. I could go out and spend Sunday with them. We spent the Christmas holidays with the family of Sir J. H. Puleston, who had spent some time in America and was at that time an agent for the state of Pennsylvania, looking after the interests of the soldiers of the state. He was a Welchman by birth. He went over to London as one of the representatives of the Treasury Department to sell or place the first bonds that were placed in Europe. His wife and two daughters were very pleasant ladies and we enjoyed our visit very much. The next year we spent a few days with them at Brighton. The habit of the country people who entertain is to have a good many visitors during the holiday season and it is considered an especially social occasion to have a long table filled every meal, with a great deal of formality.

Vice-Consul-General Nunn had occupied the position for many years and practically controlled the business of the office, General Badeau devoting most of his time to literary work and in writing the military history of General Grant. While Mr. Nunn was a very competent man for the ordinary business of the office, he was not very well acquainted with American affairs and therefore was not popular with Americans doing business. He was brusque and short in his manner and after getting well acquainted with the office I deemed it necessary to dispense with his services and recommended the appointment of L. H. Mitchell, who at that time was con-



nected with the Egyptian service as a topographical engineer. His home was in Parishville and he was a student of the old St. Lawrence Academy at the time I was. When the war broke out he was a student at Harvard College. He received his commission as lieutenant in a Massachusetts regiment and was an efficient officer in the Engineer Corps of the Army of the Potomac. After returning from the army he completed his course and entered a School of Mines at Columbia College and went to Freiberg, Germany, to study mining engineering. He finally went to Egypt and entered the military service and was placed at the head of a geological expedition near the border of Abyssinia, where he and his party were captured by brigands and after great suffering and exposure was finally released at the request of the U. S. authorities. After his release he was connected with the land survey for the purpose of taxation and became somewhat dissatisfied with his position and resigned and I recommended his appointment as Vice-Consul-General and he served with me during the remainder of my term. The next spring the annual military manoeuvres were to take place near Portsmouth and my wife, Miss Crane, Mr. Mitchell and I went down to be present. It was considered a great event in England for a meeting of the reserve forces and in the program was a sham battle in which some 30,000 troops were engaged. The noted English generals were in command and the manoeuvres comprised quite an extended campaign for two or three days culminating in a sham battle at Portsmouth. The Prince of Wales commanded one of the choicest regiments and we were fortunate in being so situated that we could observe the approach of the two armies as they came together. It reminded Mr. Mitchell and myself of the actual battles in war. This was Easter Monday.

In the spring of 1882 we went to Paris, which was our

first visit. On our way over we had a very pleasant experience with an English gentleman and his wife, a Mr. Dawes, who was attorney for the Rothschilds. English people are very reserved about making acquaintances, but after we had been on the route for some little way I made some inquiries about the places we were passing and showed him my card and he introduced us to his wife and we became acquainted. This proved to be as pleasant an acquaintance as we made while abroad. Mrs. Dawes was educated in France and so could speak French and was of considerable service to us upon our arrival in the way of giving orders, etc., for us. Mr. Dawes kindly chaperoned me through Paris and afterward we frequently visited them at their place at Ealing. My wife and Miss Crane spent some time in Paris. Subsequent to the arrival of my son Edwin, in July, after the Commencement at Yale, they made a tour through North England and Scotland and Stratford, after which Miss Crane left for home.

During my residence in London I was invited to a large number of noted dinners. The most important one was the Lord Mayor's banquet at the election of a new mayor, which was held in Guild Hall. Mr. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, was the chief speaker of the evening and upon that occasion the Prime Minister is always the chief guest and is expected to speak on national questions and considered as important in that regard as though he were speaking in Parliament. The formal presentation of the guests is on the same line as the presentation to the Queen, in the manner of conducting the reception and banquet.

The Lord Mayor's day is the 9th of November. In order to be Lord Mayor one must be an alderman first and must have been a sheriff of the city. He does not lose his office as an alderman, which is a position for life. An alderman

is also a magistrate. The usual custom is to elect the senior alderman by what is called the liveryman, that is, the guilds which are permitted to vote, and at a public meeting they are permitted to vote for two persons to be reported to what is called the Aldermanic Court, one of whom is to be chosen Lord Mayor, whose term of office is but for a single year. With reference to a candidate for Lord Mayor a rather amusing incident took place at a banquet given by the American Exchange, at which the senior alderman, who expected to be chosen as Lord Mayor, was a guest. He had recently been to the United States and had been the guest of the Mayor of the city of New York, and when he was called upon to speak he related his experience and on the assumption that he was to be the Lord Mayor he invited all Americans to call upon him. I said to an Englishman who sat by my side that we were not so sure in America until after election who was to hold the office. He failed of election. I also attended the banquet of the Cloth Workers Guild at Cloth Workers Hall, and was placed by the side of Lord Woolsey. This was one of the noted guilds of the city. Upon another occasion I was invited to attend a banquet given by the military organization in honor of Lord Woolsey, who had just been given that title for his successful leadership in Egypt against the insurgents. I accepted with the distinct understanding that I was not to be called upon to speak. A committee called upon me and urged my acceptance and I said that I would be glad to go. I was placed next to Lord Woolsey and when I took up the menu I found on one page the toasts that were to be given and saw that my name was also down. I was sorry to have seen that, because it was a surprise to me and I had made no preparation for a speech. It interfered with my dinner, but it will never do on such an occasion to apologize, especially when you occupy what

they would consider a representative position. I, of course, when called upon, responded as best I could. I do not think a stenographer was present, at any rate, I cannot recall all of my speech. Some days after that Mr. Lowell met me.

"I think I shall have to report you to the government."

I said "For what?"

He said, "I understand you have been making speeches."

I said that I had not been making any regular speeches.

He said, "Down at some military banquet when Lord Woolsey was present, I understand you made the speech of the evening."

I said, "Who could have reported anything of that kind?"

"Why," he said, "Lord Woolsey himself. I would like to know what you said."

I replied that I could not recall exactly, that I was called upon unexpectedly to make some remarks and I presume it must have been on account of the compliments to the chief guest, Lord Woolsey, who at one time commanded the royal troops in Canada. I said I did the best I could. Mr. Lowell said that Lord Woolsey was very much pleased and gratified and had told him all about it. I refer to it only to show that compliments to the host or chief guest will always be well received.

While in London I became well acquainted with Sir Henry Irving, the great English actor, and also with his especial friend and constant companion, Mr. Bram Stoker.

One evening I was present at the Lyceum Theater and before the close of the performance I received a polite invitation from Mr. Irving to remain and meet some of his friends. He gave a beef-steak dinner that evening in the dining-room of the theater. There were present besides the host, Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, General Horace Porter, late Am-

bassador to France, William Winter, dramatic critic of the New York Tribune, and myself, Americans; Bram Stoker, the Kendalls, leading actors of the Haymarket Theater, Wilson Barrett, the noted tragic actor, L. J. Toole, the great comedian, and Edmund Yates, editor of the London Telegraph, Englishmen. It was a noted occasion. The conversation at the table was principally confined to the discussion of dramatic matters, with interesting reminiscences of their experiences during their professional careers. Mr. Yates, General Porter and Mr. Winter spoke from the layman's standpoint.

Mr. Irving was a most charming host. While dignified, he was genial and pleasant. He referred to his recent experiences in the United States, and spoke warmly of American actors and American audiences. He was specially complimentary to Edwin Booth and Lawrence Barrett. I recall that Mr. Booth expressed regret at what he considered a general loss of interest in Shakespeare's plays. General Porter, always entertaining and witty, was at his best. Lawrence Barrett seemed to be the most reserved and dignified. To me every moment was interesting and I felt that I should never again have the opportunity to meet in such surroundings and in a social way such eminent representatives of the stage. The party did not separate until after sunrise the next morning. Mr. Irving at the time of his death without doubt stood at the head of the dramatic profession. The eulogies pronounced and written at that time justly expressed the esteem in which he was held in the United States as well as in England.

Upon the sixty-third birthday of Mr. Lowell, Hon. S. B. Packard, United States Consul at Liverpool, Col. A. B. Wood, United States Consul at Dublin, Col. Albert D. Shaw, United States Consul at Manchester, and myself

presented to Mr. Lowell a remembrance in the shape of a piece of statuary and Mr. Lowell addressed the following letter to us:

10 Lowndes Square, S. W., 22nd February, 1882.

Gentlemen.—I beg you to accept my most sincere thanks for the precious memorial of your esteem with which you have honored me. I shall always treasure it as it deserves.

If anything could make it pleasant to grow old it would be such a letter and such a gift as you have been good enough to send me on this my sixty-third birthday. I do not care to examine too closely how well established my claim may be to all the pleasant things you say of me, but I see no reason why an honest man should not accept them as he accepts fine weather without any under thought as to whether he has earned it or not. It is at least one advantage of walking toward sunset that we cast our shadows behind us and no longer stand in our own light. I shall accordingly not stand in mine but shall endeavor to believe that there must be some merit where you find so much.

At any rate you may be sure that I shall always be grateful for this mark of recognition which is all the more agreeable that it comes from men whose esteem I have every reason to value and brings me a whiff of home in a strange land.

I remain, with sincere respect and esteem,

Your obliged servant,

J. R. LOWELL.

General E. A. Merritt,  
Honorable S. B. Packard,  
Colonel A. B. Wood,  
Colonel Albert D. Shaw.

After the appointment of my successor by President Cleveland and before my return to America, I gave a farewell banquet to many of my London friends at the Continental Hotel. Governor Waller, late Governor of Connecticut, whom the President had appointed as my successor was one of my chief guests and the dinner was not only a farewell to

myself, but a welcome to Governor Waller. My other guests included Mr. Lowell and suite, Mr. Seligman, Bret Harte, at that time United States Consul at Glasgow, the Russian Consul-General, Moncure D. Conway and other well known commercial and literary gentlemen. The London correspondent of the New York Tribune, Mr. George W. Smalley, thus referred to the affair, in his newspaper:

“General Merritt has received his successor in the United States Consulate-General with grace and good will. He invited a large number of gentlemen to meet Governor Waller at dinner at the Continental Hotel on Thursday. Mr. Lowell was one of them, desiring, no doubt, to signify by his presence on such an occasion the friendly relations which have existed between the Legation and the Consulate during the last four years. Governor Waller sat on General Merritt’s left. Mr. Hoppin, first secretary of the American Legation, faced his host. As many consuls as could manage to leave their posts were present to say good bye to their chief. Not many of them, I think, will hold the same relation to Governor Waller. Civil service reform, in the Cleveland version of it, requires a hecatomb of victims on its new altar. Mr. Wilson King, of Birmingham, or lately of Birmingham, Major Evan Jones, from Newcastle, and others, were present. The Russian consul-general was one of the guests; most of the others were Americans, and most of them were representative Americans in one sense or another. Mr. Lowell’s speech was in the circumstances a difficult one to make, but was made with tact, and with all the charm of diction and manner which belong to him. General Merritt was sensible and practical. Mr. Conway found time for pleasant reminiscences of his two and twenty years of English life. Mr. Puleston seemed in doubt whether he was really an American or an Englishman; with perhaps a prefer-

ence for the former, were it but consistent with his membership of the house of commons. Mr. Harold Frederic and Mr. Oakey Hall responded in proper terms to the toast of the American press. Then came Governor Waller who took the company by surprise. If he chooses, he may have a future before him in England as an after dinner speaker. His manner is rather more oratorical than usual here, but none too much so for the matter. He delivered his jests with a quaint elaboration and unbroken solemnity of demeanor which vastly increased their effect. He expounded the true doctrines of civil service reform; which I would repeat if I did not fear to do injustice to its author. He promised General Merritt a heartfelt reception at home,—this was in illustration I think of the doctrine. He held him up to us as having labored and contrived for four years to make the place a hard one for his successor, which is true. Altogether, Governor Waller carried a rather critical audience with him. When he sat down we did not regret General Merritt the less, but we liked Governor Waller much more than we anticipated.”

Upon the announcement that I was to leave the public service, the following comment appeared in the New York Tribune London letter of April 2, 1885:

“When General Merritt took charge of the American Consulate-General in London, it is no secret that its condition was unsatisfactory. Its business methods were slovenly, to use no stronger term. Neither the authorities at Washington, nor the Custom House at New York, nor the business community of London thought themselves well served. General Merritt reorganized the office from top to bottom. He abolished existing abuses and introduced reform after reform, until, from having been one of the least efficient and business-like establishments in London, the American Consulate became the best. He gave to it the whole of his time, energy,



experience and remarkable knowledge of business. He inspected minutely the consulates throughout the kingdom, and introduced into the service a discipline and order of which it stood sadly in need. There had been varying scales of fees in London. People had been charged, at times, different prices for the same consular or notarial services, according to their supposed ability to pay. Under General Merritt there has been no capricious or sliding rate, but if an American who wanted anything done could not afford to pay the regular fee, he paid nothing. I mention this as one instance out of many which from time to time have come to my knowledge, and as showing the spirit which the office was administered. Certain it is that before General Merritt had been many months in London he had won the respect and confidence of the business community here, and of his own countrymen. This respect and confidence he has retained down to the moment when his dismissal is so abruptly announced."

The Consulate-General at London is a sort of central office through which the other consular agents throughout Great Britain and Ireland communicate with the Department of State at Washington. The Consul-General at London as a part of his duties, inspects the various agencies in the United Kingdom. If an agent of the United States at one of the consulates outside of London desires to communicate with the State Department his letter first goes to the Consul-General at London. If the letter asks a question or seeks advice which has previously been settled by the State Department upon the application of some other agency under the supervision of the Consul-General, that officer appends the information sought to the letter of the agent and returns the communication to the agent without again troubling the State Department with the matter. If the matter is an original

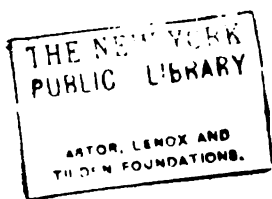
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proposition, the Consul-General appends to the communication his own ideas or recommendations and the subject is then referred by him to the State Department. The reply when received by the Consul-General is then sent to the agent who first made the query.





E. A. MERRITT, JR.



## **CHAPTER XIII**

### **RETROSPECT**



## CHAPTER XIII

### RETROSPECT

Looking back over the prolonged life I have been privileged to live, I am deeply grateful to the kind Providence that has granted me "length of days." While I have not been free from the vicissitudes that are inevitable to mortals, I have been spared many of the ills that come to men and I can look back with great thankfulness to the many unmerited blessings I have enjoyed.

Inheriting from temperate ancestors a strong body, I have lived soberly and temperately, have been blessed in my home and in many friendships. While I have not been ambitious for place or power, many public honors have come to me, and I have the assurance of too partial friends, and what is of perhaps greater satisfaction, the consciousness that I have never violated any public or private trust. Entrusted with large interests, they have not been betrayed by me and I have regarded every office I have held as a sacred trust and have tried to be as conscientious in the administration of public interests as I would be in my private dealings with my fellow men. At the close of my career, it is a great satisfaction to feel that in the midst of the great political contests in which I have participated, with the inevitable rancor which accompanies partisan and factional competition, my good name has never been sullied, and I have retained the friendship and respect of those who have been arrayed against me in the strife of parties and factions. I feel that I have been treated with consideration far beyond my desert and come to old age with the circle of my friends unbroken save by the losses which death has brought.

Without boasting I can truly say that in a long life which has not been free from many contests, I have never know-



ingly taken unfair advantage of my opponents, and if I have fought hard, I have fought fairly, have exulted in no victory and have never used any public trust that came to me for any personal advantage.

In the course of my life I have seen many careers which promised exceptional success, wrecked by failure to be honest and fair not only in private and business life but in political affairs, and while I have seen many sharp corners turned in what might be called political competitions, I can bear testimony to the uprightness and honor of the men, both friend and foe, with whom I have been associated in a long life of more than ordinary political activity.

Looking back through the changes which have taken place, I can feel deeply grateful that I have been privileged to live in the most marvelous era of the world's life. I have seen the development of steam and the modern application of electricity, the great forces which have revolutionized industry and changed our nation from an agricultural country into one of commerce and manufactories, one of the richest of all lands.

The northern country which has been my home has been changed from a wilderness into a rich and populous region. The railroad has come over the trail where I carried my surveyor's chain, and the rivers where I fished in boyhood, have been harnessed to great dynamos which turn busy wheels and light distant towns. The little clearings have changed into fertile farms, rude huts into rich homes, hamlets into towns adorned with public buildings and all the appliances of a prosperous and refined life.

While I have ever been appreciative of the public honors I have received from my country, I have, I think, been loyal to it, not because it has been generous to me, but because I inherited from my patriotic ancestors a love of country, and of

all the events in my public life I look back on none with greater pride than my career as a soldier in the time of the Civil War. Realizing what war meant, I went into it not only with the enthusiasm of youth, but with a fervent patriotic desire to serve my country in her hour of need. The work assigned to me was arduous, but it had much to do with the care of the soldiers and providing for their wants and while it was less spectacular than the more stirring scenes of the battlefield, it was no less important in the great mechanism of war. It is satisfaction to me to feel that I shall be numbered with the great host of loyal men who helped to win the victory which made our nation one people.

I know the temporary nature of political and public honors. Men come and go, the work they do merges in with the world's work, other men take their places, and their names and work are measurably forgotten. But when men ally themselves with causes and institutions which live, though their names perhaps become lost, the work they do remains. It is because of this that I feel that my work, since my retirement from public life, has not been wholly in vain, and that perhaps the largest and best, certainly the most lasting work of my life, has been done in what may be termed my later years.

My ancestors were God-fearing men and women and I inherited a belief that the higher forces of life were the most permanent. I have revered God, respected law, honored and kept the Sabbath, upheld the sanctuary of all faiths and have tried to sustain every cause which looked to the betterment of the community in which I lived.

The earlier pages of this life story tell the story of the hard conditions in which I was reared. The advantages of education were few, and though I was fairly well equipped in comparison with my fellows and while I tried to teach

others less well educated than myself, I realized then, as I have realized all my life, the handicap which lack of education puts upon every man. The days of my youth were days of hardship. Life was a struggle for existence. Schools were few and primitive and however ambitious one was for knowledge, the facilities and opportunities for acquiring it were few.

Out of this sense of my personal limitations, came a life-long desire to help to give to others the educational advantages which were denied to me and if my life is to be long remembered, it will be, I hope, not through the public places I have held, but through my identification with the educational institutions of the community where I have had my home.

The North Country is remote from the more populous sections of the State. Its population is an unmixed native stock, hardy, with strong minds hungering for knowledge. But the great educational institutions were far removed from it. The colleges were hundreds of miles away and no higher institutions were in existence in this remote section, almost an empire in extent. When St. Lawrence University was established at Canton, the shire town of the county, I felt that a new era was coming to the North Country, and while my absence from the region during the earlier years of its history prevented my active work in the laying of its foundations, my later years have been devoted to its welfare. As the President of its Board of Trustees, for almost a generation, I have seen it pass through the many crises which attend the building up of great institutions, but my faith in its success has never faltered; and while it has entailed many sacrifices, I rejoice that I have been spared to see it developed into a great University, with plant and equipment equal to the best, an enlarging endowment and increasing numbers, with

nearly one thousand graduates doing it honor in their lives and holding it in grateful remembrance.

The recent addition of its agricultural department has enlarged the scope of its usefulness and makes it more than ever the benefactor of the region where it is placed. It may perhaps be pardoned to a father, that he should have pride in the fact that his son was largely influential in the Legislature, in securing the generous appropriations from the State, which founded and is maintaining this school as an adjunct of the University. For several years I have tried to shift onto younger shoulders the honor of the position held by me as President of the Board but with very kind indulgence the alert young men who are my associates refuse to allow me to surrender my office.

The founding of the State Normal School and the Clarkson Memorial School of Technology at Potsdam, are matters of local history and of State importance. They have grown into institutions of large influence. Their graduates are many, widely scattered and doing large work. Their establishment was not easy — especially that of the Normal School. Rival towns contended hard for its location, and only by the most persistent work, helped perhaps by personal influence and some experience and knowledge in the management of affairs, was it finally located in its present position. Its success has justified its establishment and I have naturally felt for it the pardonable pride of a father for a child. Its welfare has been my solicitude and I have kept myself young by association with its teachers and students, who have been associated with me in friendliest interest for the welfare of the school. I have been honored by being President of its Board for many years and I have watched its growth with satisfaction. Through the many teachers it has sent out its influence is far reaching and permanent.

The Clarkson School represents in fine fashion the new life of technical instruction and with its good equipment and generous maintenance, it has brought to the North Country educational advantages which have been of inestimable worth. I have been upon the Board since its inception and have found in the many duties of these institutions perhaps an antidote against the rust of old age. Some one has facetiously said that I held every office in Northern New York which carried no salary. While my association with these beneficent institutions has not been highly remunerative, I have felt blessed beyond measure that I have been privileged to aid them in their work, feeling that they are among the great forces which are permanently to benefit mankind.

In concluding this record of what may fairly be called a busy life, I will reiterate what I have earlier said, that I have been tempted to write this story through the persuasions of my too partial friends. I feel grateful to the friendships I have enjoyed and hope that my life has been of some use to those I must soon leave behind. It has been a good world to me and I am glad that I have lived in it and have had fair chance to do the work apportioned to my hands.

**APPENDIX**  
**THE MERRITT FAMILY AND DESCENT**



## APPENDIX

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### The Merritt Family and Descent

#### Early History and Descent from Eadnoth the Staller, a Saxon General

At the time of the Norman Conquest, in A. D. 1066, hereditary surnames were unknown, but words of description were coming into use among the higher classes. The name of a man's father, or the place where he lived, or his occupation was used for this purpose, and, in course of time, they became surnames. Persons of quality and distinction were usually known by the name of their manor or estate, as John of Gaunt, or Godfrey of Bouillon.

The surname Merritt is derived from the ancient Saxon manor and parish of Meriet in Somersetshire, England. It is now written Merriott.

It is, however, probable that Meriet was the ancient Celtic (Welsh) name of this manor before the Saxon Conquest. The Merritt family were Lords of Meriet for over three hundred years. The early form of the name was "de Meriet," and some branches of the family have always retained the "de" in the name. The French preposition "de" was introduced into England — like the most of our names — by the Normans. It was used to indicate the ownership of the estate named. Henry de Warren meant that Henry was owner of the manor of Warren.

It is sometimes incorrectly stated to mean "son of" or "from."

#### THE MERRITT LINE OF DESCENT.

The following pedigree, except the first four generations, was compiled from records in the State Paper Office, London, and traces the main stem of the family — the source from which all the other branches spring:



## 1.—Eadnoth The Staller.

Comparatively little is known of this great Saxon general, and nothing at all of his early life and family, except his son Harding fitz Eadnoth.

His transactions with Aelfwold, Bishop of Sherborne, shows him to have been in an influential position before A. D., 1058. For the next ten years he served as a high officer under Kings Edward, Harold, and William the Conqueror.

William of Malmesbury, the great historian of his time, writes as follows of Eadnoth:

“The invaders being driven to Ireland, the royalists purchased the empty title of conquest at their own special loss and that of their general. His name was Ednoth, equally celebrated before the arrival of the Normans, both at home and abroad. He was the father of Harding, who yet survives, a man more accustomed to kindle strife by his malignant tongue than to brandish arms in the field of battle.”

Hardy, the historian, calls Eadnoth “Harold’s master of the horse. He was killed in 1068, in opposing the sons of Harold when they came upon their expedition from Ireland.”

A more extended account of Eadnoth may be found in Freeman’s Norman Conquest, from which the following facts are gleaned:

## Harold’s Sons’ Return From Ireland.

“The sons of Harold, with a fleet of 52 ships, manned, no doubt, partly by Irish, Danes, and partly by English exiles, sailed to some point of the Somerset coast not more fully described.

“Under the circumstances of their landing, it is not wonderful that they found the shire unfriendly, or that Eadnoth, once their father’s staller, preferred his lately sworn allegiance to the Norman king to any feelings of regard for the sons of his old master.

“Eadnoth, as King William’s officer, met the sons of Harold in arms, at the head of King William’s new subjects, the local *fyrd* of Somerset.

“Many good men were slain on both sides.” This form of words commonly refers to the rank of the persons spoken of; and it would seem to imply that such English Thengs as were left in the shire did not scruple to obey the summons of Eadnoth.

"The result seems to have been a drawn battle.

"Eadnoth fell in the fight, and his son, as we have seen, failed  
"to retain the inheritance which might have seemed the due reward  
"of his father's services."

\* \* \* \* \*

### Eadnoth and Harding.

"The most remarkable man, and the official of highest rank  
"among those who won William's favor in the western shires, was  
"Eadnoth, a man who seems to have risen by the favor of Harold,  
"who had held the office of Staller under both Edward and Harold,  
"and who held large estates in various parts of England, but  
"especially in the west.

"He became a zealous adherent of William, and died in his  
"service. It is therefore almost certain that he must have retained  
"his lands; still no part of them passed to his son Harding, who,  
"there is every reason to believe, was the ancestor of the great  
"house of the Lords of Berkeley.

"Some pretext must, therefore, have been found for defrauding  
"Harding of his succession; such a pretext was perhaps easy to be  
"found in the case of a man who, we are told, was more valiant  
"with his tongue than with his sword."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Our slight notices of Eadnoth raise a certain interest in him.  
"There is a temptation to find out as much as we can about a man  
"who was in high place, alike under Edward, Harold, and William.  
"And if there is reason to believe that he was the forefather of a  
"great English house, the pedigree acquires an interest which does  
"not belong to those pedigrees, real or mythical, which go up only  
"to the shares of William's spoils. That Eadnoth was Staller  
"under Edward appears from Cod. Diph. IV., 240, which also  
"shows that he was Sheriff of Hampshire. In that writ he is ad-  
"dressed, along with Stigand, as Archbishop, and Harold as Earl.  
"But he does not often sign the charters of Edward, though his  
"name is attached to the two spurious Westminster charters with  
"the title of 'Eadnodus, Minister.' In Domesday he once distinctly  
"appears as 'Ednod, Stalre' in Berkshire. Also as 'Ednod,  
"Dapifer.'"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Eadnoth undoubtedly had a son Harding, who was living when William of Malmesbury wrote, and of whom he gives a very curious description:

"We have thus a Harding, son of Eadnoth the Staller, and we have further evidence of his connection with Somerset and Devonshire.

"'Heardinc Eadnod sunu' appears among the witnesses to a Somerset document in Cod. Dipl. IV., 234, and we also find him selling a slave at Topsham in Devonshire."

\* \* \* \* \*

"As to the descendants of Harding, it seems in the highest degree probable that this Harding was the father of Robert Fitz Harding, of Bristol, the forefather of the second line of the Lords of Berkeley."

## 2.—Harding Fitz Eadnoth.

The foregoing quotations from William, of Malmesbury, and Freeman's Norman Conquest, and a series of letters in Notes and Queries, during 1879-80, give an account of Harding.

It is probable that he was born as early as 1035, and he is said to have died Nov. 6, about 1115. In Somerset Guild Inquest, 1084, he is called in one place, "Hardin de Meriot," and in other parts of the same record, "Harding fitz Alnod." Two years later, at the time of the great survey recorded in Domesday Book, "Harding holds Meriet of the King." In this record the manor of Meriet is described as follows:

"Dodeman holds Meriet\* of the earl;<sup>a</sup> Sevin and Bustward held it in the time of King Edward,<sup>b</sup> and yielded for seven hides.

"The arable is seven carucates."

"In demesne<sup>c</sup> are two carucates, six servants, ten villains, six cottagers, with four plough."

"There are three mills of thirty shillings rent, and twenty-five acres of meadow, and half a mile of pasture in length and breath. It was worth four pounds — now seven pounds. \* \* \*

"Harding holds Meriet of the King. Godwin held in the time of King Edward, and yielded for five hides. In demesne are two carucates, two servants, nine villains, and six cottagers, with six plough.

"The arable is six caracutes. There is a mill of five shillings rent, and ten acres of meadow, and three furlongs of pasture.

"It was worth one hundred shillings — now it is worth four pounds."

3.— Nicholas Fitz Harding.

Born before 1085, and died in 1171. He was the eldest son and heir of Harding fitz Eadnoth, and succeeded him as Lord of Meriet. In 1166 he made a return to the King, and in it he speaks twice of his father. At that time he must have been at least 76 years old. Robert fitz Harding, the ancestor of the Lords of Berkeley, is believed to have been his brother.

4.— Henry Fitz Nicholas.

Born about 1115, and died 1192. In 1171 he made a return to the King as Lord of Meriet — Scutage Roll. As Henry de Meriet he gave lands in Somersetshire to the Templars.

5.— Nicholas de Meriet.

Born about 1150, and died 1229. In the year 1194 he paid 38 shillings and 9 pence scutage toward the ransom of King Richard I.

He was succeeded in the lordship of Meriet and other lands by his son.

6.— Hugh de Meriet.

Born about 1175, and died 1236. He succeeded his father as Lord of Meriet, which he held in chief of the King. In the year 1230 he paid King Henry III. 25 marks for the relief of his lands.

7.— Nicholas de Meriet.

Born about 1200; died, 1254. He succeeded his father as Lord of Meriet, and in 1236 gave King Henry III. 12 pounds and 10 shillings for the relief of one Knight forfeit in Meriet, which his father held in chief of the King. In 1254 he contributed the sum of 37 shillings and 2 pence in aid for making the king's eldest son a knight.

8.— John de Meriet.

Born about 1230, and died 1294. In the inquisition post mortem, taken at his death, in the thirteenth year of Edward I., he is described as having been seized of the manor of Meriet and

the advowson of the church thereof, then certified to be of the value of 20 pounds. The following is also declared to be his son and heir:

9.—Sir John de Meriet.

Born about 1255; died 1301. He was a great warrior, and had the honor of knighthood conferred on him by King Edward I., in all of whose wars he was engaged.

In the year 1299 he obtained from the king a charter of free Warren, a market, and a fair in the manor of Meriet.

He was one of the great men that had special summons to attend the king with horse and arms to march against the Scots.

By wife Lucia he left three sons, John, George, and William.

He was succeeded as Lord of Meriet by his eldest son, Sir John de Meriet, who was a knight and bore the arms — barry of six, surmounted by a bend. It is shown by his seal, still preserved on an ancient deed. He seems to have been in great favor at the Court of King Edward II., but was of a turbulent temper, insomuch that he was excommunicated from the church by John de Drokensford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, for emboweling his deceased wife. He was afterward pardoned, and died in 1327.

He was succeeded by his son, John de Meriet, then aged 20 years, but he died soon without issue, and was succeeded by his uncle, George de Meriet. The successor of George de Meriet was his son (by wife Isabella), Sir John de Meriet, lord of the manor of Meriet and other lands in the same county. He died without male issue in 1345, and was succeeded by his cousin, Simon de Meriet, son of William de Meriet, the following:

10.—William de Meriet.

Born about 1280, and son of Sir John de Meriet, by wife Lucia, is not known to have possessed an estate. His son, Simon de Meriet, became lord of the manor of Meriet through the failure of his brother's issue.

11.—Simon de Meriet.

Born about 1310; was lord of the manor of Meriet, and also possessed of the estates of Ashton, Long Ashton, and others. He was succeeded by his son —

## 12.— Sir John Meriet.

Born about 1340. He was created a knight by King Edward IV., and was a man of distinction. He married Eleanor de Beauchamp, sister and co-heir of Sir John de Beauchamp, of Hatch. Her sister, Cecilia, married Sir Roger Seymour, and from them descended Lady Jane Seymour, Queen of King Henry VIII., and mother of King Edward VI. The Beauchamp and Seymour families were of great eminence and distinction.

Sir John Beauchamp died in the year 1344, without issue, and his estates were inherited by the heirs of his sisters Meriet and Seymour.

## 13.— John Meritt.

Born about 1360. He was the only son of Sir John Meriet by Eleanor, and succeeded him at Hatch.

He possessed also the lordships of Lopen Stratton and Marston Magna, with the advowson of the church of Meriet and Buckland, all of which, at his death in 1372, descended to his son and heir, Sir John Meritt.

He also possessed a part of the manor of Sellindge, in the county of Kent, which descended through his mother from Sir John de Beauchamp.\*

He was succeeded in his Somerset estates by his son, Sir John Meritt, who, by wife Maud, had three children, George, Margaret, and Elizabeth. The two former died without issue, and the latter married a Seymour and inherited the estates.

\* By reason of the law in Kent, it is believed the other sons of John Merritt (13) inherited part of the manor of Sellindge; that some of them settled there, and that Henry Merritt, of Scituate, Mass., descended from him.

The following facts lead to this conclusion:

*First.* Henry Merritt came from the county of Kent, and the other men of Kent at Scituate, so far as known, came from the neighborhood of Tenterden, which is only ten miles from Sellindge.

*Second.* There was no other Merritt family in Kent, or near there, before 1600, except the Merritts at Sellindge.

*Third.* The late Wm. H. Merritt (lost on the steamer Atlantic), met a gentleman in England by the name of Merritt, from the county of Kent, who informed him that a member or members of his family had emigrated to New England from Kent, over 200 years before.

He also told him that he could trace his pedigree back to the time of King Richard I.

## GENERAL MERRITT'S ANCESTRY — PATERNAL LINE.

### 1.— Henry Merritt.

Born in County of Kent, England, probably the parish of Tenderden — about 1590. He came to America before 1628 and with others called "Men of Kent" founded the town of Scituate, Plymouth County, Mass., where he became a large landed proprietor, and died November, 1652. The earliest Scituate record is a deed of land in 1628, by Henry Merritt to Nathaniel Tilden. His wife called "Goodwife Merrit" joined the church 1637. Children — John, Henry and Katharine.

### 2.— John Merritt.

Born in New England probably, about 1625, and died in Scituate after the year 1670. He succeeded to his father's estate and was the only son known to have left descendants. His homestead was on Greenfield Lane and "the drift way" now called Merritt's Corner. He married Elizabeth Wyborne, daughter of Thomas, of Boston, April 3, 1655. Children — John, Henry, Jonathan and Deborah.

### 3.— John Merritt.

Born in Scituate in the year 1660, and died in the same place June 5, 1740. He married, 1686, Elizabeth Hyland, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth (Stockbridge) Hyland, of Scituate.

Children — John, Thomas, Elizabeth, Mary, Ichabod, Hannah, Henry, Jonathan, David, Ebenezer, Abigail and Ezekial.

### 4.— Johnathan Merritt.

Born 1702, and died in Hebron, Tolland County, Conn., October 21, 1758. He moved to Hebron about 1730, and the town records show that he bought land there in November, 1735, and also 1736 and 1746. He married, in Scituate 1727, Mehitable Daman, daughter of Zachary and Mehitable (Chittenden) Daman.

Children — Simeon, Noah, Jonathan and probably others.

### 5.— Noah Merritt.

Born in Scituate, 1730, and died March 24, 1814, in Templeton, Worcester County, Mass. He settled in Templeton as early

as 1753, and probably was a builder by trade, for in 1763 he contracted with the town to build the first bridge over Otter River.

Children — Noah, Abigail, Lucy, Sarah, Henry, Esther, Simeon, Molly, Eunice, Wilks, Uriah, Hannah and Dytha.

#### 6.—Noah Merritt.

Born October, 1758, in Templeton, and died August 21, 1843, in Sudbury, Rutland County, Vt. He served six years with distinction in the Revolutionary War, and was personally acquainted with Washington. He was a man of high character and great intellectual and physical force. Married Eunice Metcalf and moved to Brandon, Vt., about 1785.

Children — Noadiah, Henry, Eunice, Anna, Esther, Roxie, Achsah.

#### 7.—Noadiah Merritt.

Born in Templeton, December 23, 1782, and died in Pierrepont, N. Y., January 1, 1854. Married first Uranie Goodrich, November 26, 1807. Children — Polly, Lucy M., Esther A., Henry H., Nabby, Roxie and Achsah B. He married second Relief Parker, November 25, 1821. Children—Noadiah Parker, Emily, Uranie, Julia Ellen, Darwin Hamilton, Edwin Atkins, Julius Fernando, William Wallace, Marshall Josephus and John Harvey.

#### 8.—Edwin A. Merritt.

Born in Sudbury, Rutland County, Vt., February 26, 1828. He resided in Vermont until he was ten years' of age, when he went to live with a married sister in West port, Essex County, N. Y. In 1841 he removed to St. Lawrence County, where he has since resided. By occupation he was formerly a Surveyor and Engineer. He was unanimously elected in 1854 Supervisor of Pierrepont, re-elected the two following years, and in 1857-58-59-60 he was clerk of the Board of Supervisors. He was elected by large majorities, Member of Assembly 1859-60; Member of Constitutional Convention 1867, and was the Republican candidate for State Treasurer in 1875. He has filled other public positions of honor and trust, the more important of which are, Quartermaster of the 60th N. Y. Regiment and Commissary of Subsistence during the Rebellion; Quartermaster-General of New York for four years on the staff of Governor Fenton,



and is the only official that has ever filled the three important offices of Naval Officer, Surveyor and Collector of the Port of New York. General Merritt married Eliza Rich in Pierrepont, N. Y., May 5th, 1858. Children — Edwin Albert, Arthur Willson, Parker Rich and Darwin Fenton.

### RICH GENEALOGY.

Henry Rich, Earl of Holland, is the first known member of the Rich family. He gave the name to Holland House, built by Sir Walter Cope, 1607, and situated on the hill near Kensington Gardens, London. The house is famous for its associations with the names of those who have occupied it. After Lord Holland's execution, it passed into the hands of the Parliamentary generals Fairfax and Lambert, but was later restored to Lady Holland. Addison lived in it from 1716 to his death 1719. Henry Fox, father of Charles James Fox, purchased it in 1762, and it is still in the possession of his line.

Among the other inmates have been Cromwell, Ireton, William Penn, William the Third, and Macaulay.

Ebenezer Rich

Olive Town

Jacob Rich

Sally Wilson

born Sutton, Mass.,

born Warwick, Mass.,

died Canton, N. Y.

died Pierrepont, N. Y.

Married at Shoreham, Vt.

Children: Albert, Lucy, Caleb, Olive, Lucinda, Eliza (Mrs. E. A. Merritt), Charles.

Eliza Rich born at Canton, N. Y., December 5, 1827.







